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The Decline of Women's Rights in Turkey: Is it Political Islam...or Tayyip?
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March 29, 2016

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Abstract

In the 1920s, Kemal Mustafa Ataturk established the secular Republic of Turkey. Under this establishment, religion was separated from public life, and especially from politics. This setup included the protection of women's rights, including the banning of polygamy and the provision of equal rights in divorce and the right to vote. This protection of women's rights was reinforced on a global scale in the 1990s when women's rights came to the forefront of the worldwide agenda, beginning the push for women's rights to be considered along with human rights. Countries around the world jumped on the bandwagon, Turkey included. When the *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, or the AKP, was elected in 2002, the precedent of protecting women's rights was cast aside. Women were pushed into more "traditional" roles, resulting in a decrease in employment rates and a dramatic increase in domestic and other violence as feminist voices grew louder. The problem this research seeks to address is the source of the decline in women's rights in Turkey over the past decade and a half. To ascertain the causes of this decline, the research looks at laws, public opinion and statistics regarding female participation in society, as well as violence against women. The independent variable, the rise of political Islam in Turkey, is studied under the lens of similar factors, including laws, public opinion and the changing role of the military in Turkish politics. The analysis of these two variables reveals that, while the implementation of political Islam has been a factor in the decline in women's rights, the decline is more attributable to President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's instrumental use of culture to gain an authoritarian hold on power. These findings provide various implications regarding Turkey. First, it seems that the interpretation of Islam's being enforced by President Erdoğan and his government has had a negative impact on the rights of women in Turkey, which ultimately could damage Turkey's acceptance into the European Union. Secondly, the conclusion that Erdoğan has established a dictatorship has negative implications for the future of Turkey, especially if Erdoğan continues to exploit his power. Lastly, given that previous trends in Turkey, along with much of the rest of the world, have been directed toward progress for women's rights, Turkey's backsliding presents a disconcerting anomaly compared to both regionally situated countries and the rest of the world.

Introduction: The Puzzle

The secular republic that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk built in Turkey in 1923 afforded women a variety of rights. Women had the right to vote in all elections by the mid-1930s; they were given equal rights in matters of divorce and child custody; headscarves were banned in universities and state buildings; and polygamy was banned. Women's education rates continually increased with employment rates. Alongside largely oppressive regimes and dictatorial practices, Turkey served as an exception and a model for the surrounding Middle Eastern states in terms of women's rights, exemplifying what secularism could mean for a largely Muslim society.

Fast-forward to 2016, and women's rights appear to be declining. Under Turkey's current president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, domestic violence has doubled, female employment has gone down, and Erdoğan has made disparaging statements about how women measure up to men. In 2014, Turkey sat at number 125 out of 140 countries in the 2014 Global Gender Gap Index published by the World Economic Forum,¹ and was bumped down to 130 in 2015.² The shift has been gradual and has been met with opposition from women activists. And so the puzzle is simple: Why have women's rights, measured by policy, public opinion, voting data and other relevant factors, seen a decline in Turkey since 2002? This puzzle has many implications for Turkey, both in assessing the direction in which the country is headed as well as whether this direction is in the best interest of the Turkish public. If it is not, that raises questions regarding the ways in which this shift is manifesting.

¹ Sevinclidir, Pinar, "Beyond the Headscarf: Turkey's Women Struggle for Equality – BBC News," *BBC News*, June 3, 2015, Accessed February 17, 2016.

² World Economic Forum, "The Global Gender Gap Report 2015," 2015, Accessed March 24, 2016.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis proposed to address this puzzle is that the increased presence of political Islam beginning with the rise of the *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, or the AKP, in 2002 has led to a decrease in women's rights in Erdoğan's Turkey. The presence of political Islam can be found in policies and a shifting ideology within the political agenda. These are factors that can directly affect a variety of societal elements, and appear to have been the source of the shift in women's rights.

It is important to note that political Islam is not a concept unique to Turkey; rather, political Islam has existed all over the Middle East for centuries. Turkey is an anomaly because it began as an effective democracy for its time and regional standing. Today, in a time when progress is often denoted by democratization, and while other states in the Middle East are striving for progress, Turkey seems to be moving backward.

In addressing the puzzle, it is necessary to acknowledge the potential magnitude of the role that President Erdoğan has played in the decline of women's rights. This research aims to test the above hypothesis, with a focus on the role of political Islam. However, the overwhelming presence of Erdoğan in every facet of Turkish life is an impossible factor to ignore. As the research considers the role that political Islam has played in the decline of women's rights, it will also consider the broader role that Erdoğan has had in this decline to ascertain whether the puzzle can be boiled down to the simple factor of political Islam.

Background/Theory

Women's Rights

Women's rights took the forefront of global issues most notably in the 1990s. The most important manifestation of this push was the 1993 United Nations Conference on Human Rights. Around this time, women's rights moved out of the periphery to be considered within the context of human rights. Recognizing that the human rights platform is one with powerful sway in the international arena, activists and politicians have used this to their advantage. Expanding the definition of human rights, theorists have gone on to show that the oppression of women can occur in a variety of ways and originate from various sources. The theorists are firm in one assertion, though: Protecting women's rights can save lives. As Charlotte Bunch puts it, "Sexism kills."³ She's right. The World Health Organization has documented that in some countries, female children are given less to eat, breastfed less and taken to the doctor less frequently than young boys.⁴ Though this may not translate directly immediately to death, it is a detriment to the health of females.

Beyond violence, the oppression that extends into every facet of life can be just as harmful. Restrictions on birth control, societal involvement, attire and employment occur all over the world; each restriction carries its own unique adverse consequences. The importance of protecting these rights cannot be underestimated. Isobel Coleman explains, "Focusing on women is often the best way to reduce birth rates and child mortality; improve health, nutrition, and education; stem the spread of HIV/AIDS; build robust and self-sustaining community

³ Bunch, Charlotte, "Women's Rights as Human Rights: Toward a Re-Vision of Human Rights," *Human Rights Quarterly* 12, no. 4 (1990): 486-98.

⁴ Ibid.

organizations; and encourage grassroots democracy.”⁵ The effort to improve women’s rights is not without its benefits for everyone.

Women’s Rights in Islam

The argument can be made that some of these worldwide oppressive measures result from religion, with varying interpretations of doctrines and holy texts resulting in a lessening of women’s rights. Various theories have developed regarding the effects of Islam in particular on women’s rights. There exists a general Western assumption referred to by many scholars — including Elliot Friedland, the Dialogue Coordinator at the Clarion Project, James Arlandson, a writer for the *American Thinker* and Abdul-Rahman Al-Sheha, author of *Woman in the Shade of Islam* — that Islam is geared toward the oppression of women, especially when *shari’a* law is included in politics.⁶ This Western assumption will not guide this research. The research instead will focus on the various interpretations of Islam by leaders and regimes, and how these affect the rights of women.

The evolution of the interpretation of Islam is best observed by looking back at the origins of Islam, and how women were regarded during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Many scholars point to the Prophet Muhammad’s establishment and protection of women’s rights and equality. He treated his wives with respect, and the words of God he orated established the spiritual equality of women and men.⁷ Geraldine Brooks, author of *Nine Parts of Desire: The Hidden World of Islamic Women*, examines Muhammad’s equal treatment of all of

⁵ Coleman, Isobel, "The Payoff from Women's Rights," *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 3 (2004): 80.

⁶ Arlandson, James, "Top 10 Rules in the Quran that Oppress Women," *The American Thinker*, November 13, 2005. (see also) Friedland, Elliot. "Women’s Rights Under Sharia." The Clarion Project, February 19, 2014.

⁷ Ahmed, Leila, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*. (N.p.: Yale UP, 1993).

his wives, which served to establish a norm of equality in marriage.⁸ Despite assumptions made about Islamic beliefs regarding the role of women in society, Muhammad's wife Aisha serves as one of the most compelling examples of a dynamic and involved female participating in Islamic Arabia. Writing for the *Telegraph*, Carla Power, author of *If Oceans Were Ink: An Unlikely Friendship and a Journey to the Heart of the Qur'an*, worked with Sheikh Mohammad Akram Nadwi to learn about the Qur'an, and in doing so she discovered the importance of Aisha. "A top Islamic scholar, an inspiration to champions of women's rights, a military commander riding on camelback, and a fatwa-issuing jurist, Aisha's intellectual standing and religious authority were astonishing, by the standards of both our own time and hers,"⁹ Power says.

As for those who claim that Islam originally intended for women to take a passive role in education and the workplace, Akram has researched women in the early days of Islam and compiled his findings in his book *al-Muhaddithat: The Women Scholars in Islam*. He found many examples of participation and leadership by women. Examples include Ummal-Darda, "a seventh-century jurist and scholar who taught jurisprudence in the mosques of Damascus and Jerusalem,"¹⁰ and "fourteenth-century Syrian scholar Fatimah al-Bataiyyah, who taught both men and women in the Prophet's mosque in Medina, drawing students from as far away as Fez."¹¹ Akram claims to have found 9,000 examples of female experts of *hadith*, which are the recorded words and actions of the Prophet Muhammad.¹² In his book, Akram wrote, "I do not

⁸ Brooks, Geraldine, *Nine Parts of Desire: The Hidden World of Islamic Women* (New York: Anchor, 1995), 80-95.

⁹ Power, Carla, "What the Koran Really Says about Women," *Telegraph*, November 6, 2015, accessed February 24, 2016.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

know of another religious tradition in which women were so central, so present, so active in its formative history.”¹³ Clearly women have always been involved in the goings-on of Islam.

Present-day interpretations are reaching for context outside of the original intentions of Islam.

Despite the equality-based origins of Islam, its evolution and interpretations have changed its relationship with women’s rights. Pre-Islamic Arabia consisted of freedoms for women that became limited with the manifestation of Islam. Leila Ahmed, the first professor of women's studies in religion at Harvard Divinity School and author of *Women and Gender in Islam*, explains that women were socially active in pre-Islamic Arabia, participating in warfare and politics.¹⁴ The introduction of Islam did partially diminish this participation. However, the introduction of Islam allowed for many other rights for women, including the equality of men and women. The gray area in regard to the treatment of women arises due to the ambiguities in the holy book of the Qur’an as well as in *shari’a* law, allowing for a variety of interpretations that can serve to establish disparities in the treatment of women. This ambiguity is apparent all over the Middle East, as interpretations vary by region and ruler, restricting freedoms for women in some areas while expanding them in others.

Women in Islam in the Middle East

There are various examples of the application of these interpretations in different Middle Eastern countries. Interpretation of the verse in the Qur’an referring to the preeminence of men and their role as overseers is an example of holy text that has led to women’s oppression. In some countries, this preeminence of men functions as a loose guideline. Elsewhere, it is

¹³ Power, Carla, "What the Koran Really Says about Women," *Telegraph*, November 6, 2015, accessed February 24, 2016.

¹⁴ Ahmed, Leila. *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate* (N.p.: Yale UP, 1993).

approached as a law giving men very strict reign over women and allowing for domestic violence, a problem that is prevalent in Egypt.¹⁵

Additionally, Lisa Beyer, former reporter for *Time*, explains that varying interpretations make it difficult for women to sue for divorce, whereas men are virtually released from marriage on demand.¹⁶ In Jordan, less-conservative interpretations of the Qur'an allow women to travel without permission from their husbands and male relatives. Also in Jordan, when a woman is married to a foreigner, she can pass her nationality on to her children.

Saudi Arabia largely practices *Wahhabism*, a form of Islam that adheres to a strict interpretation of Islam, one that stipulates that those who do not practice this form of Islam are infidels. At its most extreme, *Wahhabism* has been seen as distorting Islam and leading to extremism and terrorism.¹⁷ As for women in Saudi Arabia, they are prohibited from driving, and male family members have authority over women. On the other hand, the Saudi government has cracked down on domestic violence.

Iraq exemplifies a slightly secular interpretation, as women are given a quarter of the seats in parliament and government positions. On the other end of the spectrum, the increased presence of religion in political institutions has made it so that women are forced to wear the *hijab*, which is the head covering, and the *abaya*, a long black cloak that covers women from shoulders to feet.¹⁸ Iraq was ranked second worst among Arab countries for women's rights,

¹⁵ Beyer, Lisa, "The Women of Islam," *Time*, November 25, 2001, accessed February 24, 2015.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ "Analyses: Wahhabism," *PBS Frontline*, accessed April 7, 2015..

¹⁸ "A Look at the Rights of Women in Arab Countries — Middle East." *Haaretz*, March 8, 201, accessed April 7, 2015.

following Egypt, according to a study done by the Thomas Reuters Foundation.¹⁹ Women in Egypt are marginalized largely because of the Muslim Brotherhood's hold on power in the country and the group's views on women. The Muslim Brotherhood maintains that men should retain strict control over the lives of women. The group denies women contraceptives, sexual freedom and inheritance equal to that of men.²⁰ This aligns with a strict interpretation of Islam, similar to the interpretation of Islam present in Saudi Arabia.

Coleman looks deeper at different interpretations of Islam made by regimes in the Middle East. She explains that in areas with more Islamic conservatism, empowering women is seen as a move toward westernization, a concept to which many Middle Eastern countries are rather resistant. In Saudi Arabia, through the practice of *Wahhabism*, the state maintains strict control over women's access to public life.²¹ Additionally, when the control of education was transferred from religious authorities to the Ministry of Education in Saudi Arabia, education reform began and female literacy went up.²²

Morocco, a less conservative state, serves as a contrasting depiction of a state operating under political Islam. In Morocco, there exists a high participation of women in politics, and women are allowed to choose a husband without the consent of their fathers.²³ Looking at the strict interpretations of the Qur'an in Saudi Arabia as compared to the less conservative

¹⁹ "POLL: Women's Rights in the Arab World," Thomas Reuters Foundation accessed February 16, 2016.

²⁰ Ingersoll, Jeffrey, "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood Offers 10 Reasons Why Women's Rights Are A Bad Idea," *Business Insider*, March 14, 2013, accessed December 1, 2015.

²¹ Coleman, Isobel, "The Payoff from Women's Rights," *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 3 (2004): 90.

²² Ibid. 90

²³ Ibid. 82

interpretations in Morocco, the subsequent effects on women indicate that the incorporation of political Islam may lead to the oppression of women.

Ataturk

While Turkey has been considered a secular republic since the reign of Ataturk beginning in the 1920s, it has increasingly become an example of the effects that the incorporation of Islam into politics can have on society. The theory revolving around this subject is rooted in years of observation of the slow unraveling of Ataturk's secular republic. Ataturk set the stage for secularism, instituting restrictions on religious attire, changing the Islamic calendar to a Gregorian calendar, outlawing religious courts, prohibiting enrollment in higher education religious schools (called *medreses*) and forbidding the use of Arabic for the Muslim call to prayer. Ataturk made these decisions of his own volition and intended to give the state control over religion, rather than to establish a separation of church and state.²⁴ Ataturk did not simply renounce Islam in all matters of life; rather, he saw it as possessing unnecessary evils when it came into play with politics, and these beliefs colored his time as a benevolent dictator. Sencer Ayata, a former professor of sociology at the Middle East Technical University, explains this dichotomy, saying, "[Ataturk] recognized that Islam was a significant part of Turkish society, that religious faith was important for national unity and mobilization, and that it could contribute to social and moral welfare."²⁵ In this sense, Ataturk acknowledged the benefit of Islam in allowing Turkish culture to flourish and for a state identity to form. Ayata continues, "On the other hand, [Ataturk and his regime] also saw Islam as a traditional force and a source

²⁴ Harding, C., "Islam and the Secular State in Turkey," In *Turkey — Political, Social, and Economic Challenges in the 1990s* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995).

²⁵ Ayata, Sencer, "Patronage, Party, and State: The Politicization of Islam in Turkey," *Middle East Journal* 50, no. 1 (1996): 40-56.

of conservative influence, superstition, false ideas, and dogmas that they felt were responsible for Turkey's backwardness, and were obstacles to the achievement of national ideals.”²⁶

And so Ataturk went about implementing assertive secularism, a form of secularism that aims to rid the public sphere of religion.²⁷ The alternative, as is practiced by the United States, is passive secularism, which “requires the state to play a passive role that allows public visibility of religion.”²⁸ Ataturk’s goal in emphasizing the former was to keep “Islam confined to the realm of individual conscience.”²⁹ The possibility remains that the general public did not favor the government being structured around secularism; rather the people may actually have preferred political Islam, but accepted this forceful implementation by a cautious leader.³⁰

The Rise of Political Islam and the AKP

Since Ataturk’s death, scholars have observed a shift in power between secularists and conservatives. This was particularly apparent with the rise of the *Refah* party (Welfare party) in 1995, from which Erdoğan emerged.³¹ The first religious party to win an election in Turkey, it was not well received by the military, an institution formerly seen as the protectorate of secularism. The party was overthrown in 1997 by the military in what is referred to as 28 *Şubat*, meaning the 28th of February, and in this instance the military did not resort to violence. Instead,

²⁶ Ayata, Sencer, "Patronage, Party, and State: The Politicization of Islam in Turkey," *Middle East Journal* 50, no. 1 (1996): 41.

²⁷ Kuru, Ahmet, "Assertive and Passive Secularism," *Oxford Scholarship Online*, accessed October 6, 2015.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ayata, Sencer, "Patronage, Party, and State: The Politicization of Islam in Turkey," *Middle East Journal* 50, no. 1 (1996): 42.

³⁰ Sutton, P.W., S. Vertigans “The Established and Challenging Outsiders: Resurgent Islam in Secular Turkey, Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions,” *Totalitarian Movements and Political Regimes* 3, no. 1, (2002): 58-78.

³¹ Ibid. 72

Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan resigned after demands from the military.³² But the implications of the party's rise in the first place are what interest scholars; a large portion of the general public was supporting a party that Ataturk would have wholly opposed, implying either a shift in social power or a social realignment of political desires. What made it all the more startling was the party's success in the two largest metropolitan areas of Istanbul and Ankara, two areas that had previously epitomized the secular social structure.³³ This was not a change that simply materialized. To go back on the secular republic of Ataturk was to go back on the foundation of the past 70 years in Turkey. The question is whether it was motivated by the desire of the people as a whole or the desire of those with power.

Philip W. Sutton and Stephen Vertigans, PhD., explain that the power shift from the secularists to the conservatives corresponded with the rise of *Refah*. The shift was made more substantial by the increasing numbers of influential connections of the conservatives. The clear divide between the secularists and conservatives also was solidified by the development of "negative other-images" of the secularists on behalf of the conservatives.³⁴ This divide was between a group that had supported the early principles established in Turkey and a group that recently had received overwhelming public support. The groups were identified by their ideological beliefs and practices, and a polarization between the two drew distinct lines between

³² Erimtan, Can, "The end of "Secular Turkey" or the Ottomans re-emergent?" *RT*, January 13, 2015, accessed March 23, 2016.

³³ Ayata, Sencer, "Patronage, Party, and State: The Politicization of Islam in Turkey," *Middle East Journal* 50, no. 1 (1996): 40.

³⁴ Sutton, P.W., S. Vertigans, "The Established and Challenging Outsiders: Resurgent Islam in Secular Turkey, Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions," *Totalitarian Movements and Political Regimes* 3, no. 1, (2002): 70.

the two possible roads for the future of Turkey. Thus began a societal division, marking a point of growing Islamic influences in Turkish politics.

Voting data provides additional insight into the dynamics of the implementation of political Islam. Voting patterns have been stable for decades, meaning that no sudden shift away from secularism occurred. In 1986, only 7 percent of the population was in favor of an Islamic republic. Additionally, the large urban middle class in Turkey is attached to a secular regime, pointing to a large presence of anti-Islamic sentiment in the political realm.³⁵ Yet, the societal changes point to a rise in Islam, regardless of the motives behind the changes. In the 1970s, beer was classified as alcohol and beer sales were restricted, an action that many saw as an attack on the secular state – and the list grew from there. The state began encouraging religious education in secular schools, and there was a disproportionately high increase in the number of Islamic schools, brushed off by the state as simply an education expansion.³⁶

The most prominent surge of Islam occurred with the rise of Erdoğan and the *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*, or the AKP, in 2002, marking the beginning of a period characterized by rapid and drastic policy changes. Erdoğan himself said that “democracy was a train to be taken on the way to the final destination, and that the vehicle would be left when it had outlived its usefulness.”³⁷ In addition to the headscarf ban’s being lifted, Erdoğan enacted a law banning alcohol sales near mosques and schools, with additional restrictions on to whom the alcohol can

³⁵ Harding, C., "Islam and the Secular State in Turkey," In *Turkey--Political, Social, and Economic Challenges in the 1990s* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995).

³⁶ Sutton, P.W., S. Vertigans, “The Established and Challenging Outsiders: Resurgent Islam in Secular Turkey, Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions,” *Totalitarian Movements and Political Regimes* 3, no. 1, (2002): 70.

³⁷ Turan, Ilter, "Unstable Stability: Turkish Politics at the Crossroads?" *International Affairs* 83, no. 2 (2007): 319-38.

be sold, as well as the hours during which it can be sold.³⁸ In areas such as Istanbul and Ankara, where mosques and schools are abundant, this is a particularly restrictive law.

Erdoğan has been firm in decreasing the power of the military, a military that was previously renowned for its dedicated protection of the secular republic. In the past, when a party would threaten the sanctity of Atatürk's secular republic, the military would topple the government and step in as the interim power until a party that respected the secular institutions came into the picture. In 1961, 1971 and 1980, the military did just that, and in 1997, the military removed Necmettin Erbakan's *Refah* party from power, but did not seize power.³⁹

When Erdoğan stepped into power, this dynamic shifted as he ensured that the military could not interfere with his political decisions. Erdoğan's government required more transparency in the army budget and limited the executive power of the National Security Council, and also removed national security lessons from schools.⁴⁰ The offensive against the military took a more public turn during the *Ergenekon* incident in 2008, during which prosecutors indicted 275 people for allegedly conspiring against the government as part of the secular ultra-nationalist group *Ergenekon*. The accused consisted largely of generals and admirals, in addition to academics, politicians and journalists.⁴¹ Secularists saw the claims as largely unfounded and as an affront to Atatürk's secular system, a system that is facing damage to its foundation as the military is further sidelined.⁴²

Political Islam and Women in Turkey

³⁸ "Alcohol in Turkey: Not So Good For You," *The Economist*, June 1, 2013, accessed December 7, 2014.

³⁹ "A History of Turkey's Coups," *Telegraph*, April 30, 2007, accessed April 6, 2015.

⁴⁰ Pope, Hugh, "Erdoğan's Decade," *Cairo Review*, accessed April 7, 2015.

⁴¹ "Timeline: Turkey's 'Ergenekon' Trial," *Al Jazeera*, August 5, 2013, accessed April 6, 2015.

⁴² Pope, Hugh, "Erdoğan's Decade," *Cairo Review*, accessed April 7, 2015.

It is important to note that women's movements were not allowed to form during the time of Ataturk,⁴³ which indicates that some of the sentiments now being expressed by women's activist groups may have existed all along. This also may suggest that the outcries from some women and the criticism of the treatment of women in the past 15 years have resulted from latent, pent-up anger rooted in long-existing inequality. However, the data below indicates that the decline in women's rights is particularly concentrated in the time during which the AKP has been in power. Essentially, while Ataturk's secular republic may not have perfectly provided for women, there has been a drastic reduction in women's rights between 1980 through 1999 and present-day Turkey.

Women's movements gained momentum after Ataturk's death, resulting partially from their efforts in the passage of legislation geared toward protecting women and putting them on the same footing as men. Even during the time of Ataturk's republic, Prime Minister İsmet İnönü is quoted as having said, "The Turkish nation prospered and pervaded the whole world with its power and civilization only when its women had occupied their just and prestigious place along with men and worked together with men in the complicated and difficult tasks of their country."⁴⁴ The first wave of feminism began in the 1930s, largely backed by the Turkish Women's Union, with the most notable policy changes including the right for women to vote in municipal elections in 1930, which was expanded to general elections in 1934.⁴⁵

⁴³ Arat, Yesim, "Women's Rights and Islam in Turkish Politics: The Civil Code Amendment." *The Middle East Journal* 64, no. 2 (2010): 111.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Leake, Adam, "A Brief History of Feminist Movements in Turkey," *E-International Relations*, December 2011, accessed February 5, 2016.

As women's actions and their accepted place in society continued to evolve, there was a lull in feminist movements until the 1980s. The military imposed martial law in 1980, marking the third military coup as the government of Fahri Korutürk was pushed aside and a period of power transition began.⁴⁶ This phase meant that the extreme left- and right-wing populations were subdued, creating a vacuum in which women could speak out against the problems they were facing.⁴⁷ As a result of the 1980 coup, the feminist group referred to as the Kemalists, meaning secularists, emerged. Later, when *Refah* took power in 1995,⁴⁸ the Kemalists believed that the emergence of Islam in politics posed a threat to women's rights.⁴⁹ The group bore a similarity to the feminism that was manifesting in the West at the same time.⁵⁰ A group of radical feminists emerged around the time of the rise of *Refah*, and its goal was to provide the freedom for women to wear headscarves in state buildings, which was made possible in 2013, and universities, which was allowed in 2011.⁵¹

Continued feminism, urged forward by Turkey's ties to the West, included protests against domestic violence, and women demanded control of their sexuality.⁵² This gradual-yet-forceful push for the protection and equal treatment of women included a variety of

⁴⁶ "Timeline: A History of Turkish Coups," *Al Jazeera*, April 12, 2012, accessed February 05, 2016.

⁴⁷ Arat, Yesim, "Women's Rights as Human Rights: The Turkish Case," *Human Rights Review* 3, no. 1 (2001): 28.

⁴⁸ "Timeline: A History of Turkish Coups," *Al Jazeera*, April 12, 2012, accessed February 05, 2016.

⁴⁹ Arat, Yesim, "From Emancipation to Liberation: Changing Role of Women in Turkey's Public Realm," *Journal of International Affairs* 54, no. 1 (2000): 113.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* 120

⁵¹ Arsu, Sebnem, and Dan Bilefsky, "Turkey Lifts Longtime Ban on Head Scarves in State Offices," *New York Times*, October 8, 2013, accessed February 5, 2016.

⁵² Arat, Yesim, "From Emancipation to Liberation: Changing Role of Women in Turkey's Public Realm," *Journal of International Affairs* 54, no. 1 (2000): 112-113.

legislation between 1985 and 1999. A foundation was laid in 1985 for the protection of women's rights when Turkey signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, a document crafted by the United Nations in 1979.⁵³ Following this signature, Turkey joined a global movement against domestic violence, sexual harassment, rape and sex-trafficking, ranking first among participating countries in its endeavors to advance the position of women in society.⁵⁴ Continuing to advocate for the protection of women in 1990, Turkey annulled the law requiring women to acquire permission from their husbands to work outside of the house.⁵⁵ The following year, the law reducing punishment for rape of prostitutes was also annulled.⁵⁶ This sparked a movement in favor of advancing women's rights, which later resulted in support for the Turkish Civil Code to be amended.

The last major law protecting women in Turkey was passed in 1999, which was the Law on the Protection of the Family, geared toward protecting domestic violence victims.⁵⁷ Soon after the passage of this law, in 2002, the AKP came to power. Since then, no major laws for the protection of women have been passed, save for the domestic violence law which has yet to be properly enforced. The other recent positive change made for women in Turkey occurred with the aforementioned 2001 amendment of the Turkish Civil Code, which had been adopted in 1926.⁵⁸ The original code included a variety of restrictions on the road to gender equality. The legal age of marriage for women was 15, but 17 for men, and the amendment changed this to 18

⁵³ Arat, Yeşim, "Women's Rights as Human Rights: The Turkish Case," *Hum Rights Rev Human Rights Review* 3, no. 1 (2001): 29.

⁵⁴ Ibid. 31.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid. 32

⁵⁸ Women Living Under Muslim Laws, "Turkey: New Civil Code Ensures Equality in the Family," accessed February 16, 2016.

years of age for both genders.⁵⁹ The supremacy of men stated in the original code was done away with in the 2001 amendment, as was the requirement for women to seek permission from the husband regarding any marital matter.⁶⁰ The amendment also eliminated the obligatory role of the man as the head of the house, and gave women equal rights to matrimonial property, a concept that conservatives adamantly opposed.⁶¹

The International Civil Society Network (ICAN) explains how there can be policy improvements for women coinciding with a decrease in women's rights; the AKP's central focus on protecting family and tradition often comes at the expense of women's rights, as women are sidelined into peripheral roles.⁶² Especially given the extensive evidence of women in Islamic Arabia participating in politics, education and other leadership roles, this position of the AKP is contradictory. The "tradition" to which the party refers does not seem to be rooted in Islam itself, but rather in traditions developed by dictators and regimes geared toward oppressing women that have arisen since the death of the Prophet Muhammad.

Nevertheless, the AKP stands by its focus on tradition and the family. The focus was reaffirmed after the June 2011 elections when the AKP changed the "Ministry of Women" to the "Ministry of Family and Social Politics."⁶³ This agenda focus has constituted a return to women's traditional roles as wives and mothers, to which women's rights organizations have

⁵⁹ Women Living Under Muslim Laws, "Turkey: New Civil Code Ensures Equality in the Family," accessed February 16, 2016.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² "Resisting the New Conservatism: Women's Campaigns for Rights, Peace and Participation in Turkey," *International Civil Society Action Network* (2014): 4.

⁶³ Arin, Canan, "Gender Based Violence: A Present to Women of Turkey," *Reflections Turkey RSS*, April 1, 2012, accessed December 1, 2015.

responded negatively as they work to promote more involvement for women in society.⁶⁴ ICAN and Yesim Arat, a professor at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul, explain that despite the expansion of gender equality that the recent amendment to the Turkish Civil Code promised, it was criticized for not living up to expectations. This criticism is reinforced by the fact that Turkey has dropped from number 125 to 130 in the Global Gender Gap Index published by the World Economic Forum.⁶⁵ The AKP was more focused on pursuing its family-oriented agenda, and the amendment was colored by opposition.⁶⁶ As Arat explains, “For those who ultimately decide on these amendments, the main issue is the meaning of secularism and the place of religion in society rather than the status of women.”⁶⁷ This indicates a lack of recognition of the problem facing women in Turkey.

The problem does not end there, though. Modern-day women activists have risen up in opposition to the decrease in women’s rights, claiming that women’s rights in Turkey face a backslide.⁶⁸ Domestic violence rates have increased,⁶⁹ and the ban on headscarves in state buildings and universities was lifted in 2013, which some see as the enforcement of religious

⁶⁴ Arin, Canan, "Gender Based Violence: A Present to Women of Turke," *Reflections Turkey RSS*, April 1, 2012, accessed December 1, 2015.

⁶⁵ Sevinclidir, Pinar, "Beyond the Headscarf: Turkey's Women Struggle for Equality – BBC News," *BBC News*, June 3, 2015, accessed February 17, 2016.; World Economic Forum, "The Global Gender Gap Report 2015," 2015, accessed March 24, 2016.

⁶⁶ "Resisting the New Conservatism: Women’s Campaigns for Rights, Peace and Participation in Turkey," *International Civil Society Action Network* (2014): 5-6.

⁶⁷ Arat, Yesim, "Women's Rights and Islam in Turkish Politics: The Civil Code Amendmen,," *The Middle East Journal* 64.2 (2010): 250.

⁶⁸ Jones, Sophia, "Turkish Activists Say Their Country Is Sliding Backward On Women's Rights," *Huffington Post*, April 18, 2014, accessed February 24, 2015.

⁶⁹ Bilefsky, Dan, and Sebnem Arsu, "Women See Worrisome Shift in Turkey," *New York Times*, April 25, 2012, accessed February 25, 2015.

obligation, rather than religious freedom.⁷⁰ Additionally, Erdoğan has made moves to curb abortions and Caesarean sections.⁷¹ In investigating this puzzle, the research aims to determine if there is in fact a decline in women's rights, and if so, if it is due to the increase of political Islam in Turkey or simply anecdotal.

The most important area of theory revolves around the relationship between political Islam and women's rights. In relation to Turkey, the establishment of secularism has allowed for women's equality, indicating that the lessening of secularism and a conservative interpretation of Islam could lead to less equality for women. The hypothesis proposed here is that the relationship between political Islam and women's rights is significant, and that political Islam has been a driving factor in the decline of women's rights in Turkey.

The Philosophical Roots of Dictatorships

In the interest of addressing alternative explanations for this decline in women's rights, it is important for the research to include theory from a different perspective. Given that the decline in women's rights is largely concentrated in the time period during which Erdoğan and the AKP have been in power, the dynamics of the variables, outlined below, can become jumbled. There exists the possibility that this decline goes all the way to the top of the Turkish government, and there is theory to introduce this concept.

At the most basic level, this area of theory deals with ideas regarding the role of the people and the government in running a state. Thomas Hobbes wrote about the necessity for the submission of the common man to absolute authority by entering into a social contract, based on

⁷⁰ "Turkey Lifts Decades-old Ban on Headscarves," *Al Jazeera*, October 8, 2013, accessed February 25, 2015.

⁷¹ Hacaoglu, Selcan, "Turkey Abortion Law: Women Protest Plans To Curb Abortion," *Huffington Post*, June 3, 2012, accessed February 25, 2015.

the idea that man should not be left to his own devices.⁷² The German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel paralleled these views, expressing the need for an ethically organized community that is subject to the absolute authority of the government.⁷³ These theories make a case for the appeal and necessity of authoritarian rule, based on the assumption that man will act in his own self-interest to the point of destroying his fellow man, which subsequently will lead to a state of anarchy.

This theory is important in terms of understanding the rise of dictators, and the mechanisms of a functioning authoritarian state as imagined by early philosophers.

Instrumental Use of Culture for Gains in Power

Digging deeper than the general idea of the need for supreme authority, there is theory regarding how dictators gain power and hold on to it. The method for gaining an authoritarian hold on power that is most relevant to this research is the instrumental use of culture and symbols of identity. This tactic can be traced through a long list of dictators: Benito Mussolini believed that Italians were superior based on their elite culture; Adolf Hitler claimed that Germans were superior based on their race; Francisco Franco utilized Spanish nationalism to gain a stronghold on power; Josip Broz Tito also used nationalism in Yugoslavia to gain power.

⁷⁴ The tactic effectively is an appeal to reinforce and unite an identity, often targeted at a disenfranchised, underserved or underrepresented portion of the population, and often in times

⁷² Hegel, G.W.F. *The Philosophy of Right* (Ontario: Batoche Books Limited, 2001).

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Bil, Thomas, "Dictators and Nationalism: European Dictators in the 20th Century," Tilburg University, accessed March 17, 2016.

of crisis. This was the case at the outset of Nazi Germany⁷⁵ and Saddam Hussein's power grab in Iraq.⁷⁶

These patterns are even more evident in what many are calling the "modern dictators." Different from dictators in the early 1900s, the modern dictator is popularly elected before he or she clamps down with newly found authority. This can be witnessed in leaders such as Vladimir Putin in Russia, Kim Jong-il in North Korea and Hosni Mubarak in Egypt. In his book *Modern Dictators: Third World Coup Makers, Strongmen, and Populist Tyrants*, Barry Rubin, the former director of the Global Research in International Affairs Center in Israel and former editor of the Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA) Journal,⁷⁷ elaborates on the phenomenon of the modern dictator:

Today there are many dissenters to Churchill's view among the ruling classes and intellectuals in dozens of Third World countries. When the twentieth century began, absolute monarchies and despotisms were seen as pre-democratic systems, doomed to extinction by an inevitable progress. The following decades, however, have spawned new kinds of dictatorships that self-confidently proclaim themselves a superior new wave of history, arguing they are more democratic than states stressing personal freedom, the right to dissent and debate freely, fair elections, and the due process of law. Their claims receive formal approval at the United Nations and international conferences. Consequently, the most successful representative democracies now exist side by side with the most powerful dictatorships ever known.⁷⁸

The important thing to note about these modern dictatorships is the facade of democracy. As Melik Kaylan, writer for *Forbes*, *Newsweek* and the *Wall Street Journal* puts it, "elections alone

⁷⁵ Bil, Thomas, "Dictators and Nationalism: European Dictators in the 20th Century," Tilburg University, accessed March 17, 2016.

⁷⁶ Black, Ian, "Sunni v. Shia: Why the Conflict Is More Political than Religious," *Guardian*, April 05, 2015, accessed March 17, 2016.

⁷⁷ Rubin Center: Research in International Affairs, "About," accessed March 17, 2016.

⁷⁸ Rubin, Barry M. *Modern Dictators: Third World Coup Makers, Strongmen, and Populist Tyrants* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1987), 2.

do not a democracy make.”⁷⁹ After an election, there are various characteristics that the modern dictatorship adopts. Kaylan lists some of them, including “media owned by the leader’s cronies; economy dominated by same; opposition politicians constantly harassed, prosecuted, or in danger of prosecution; state and religion hand in glove; judiciary pressured to comply with government’s diktat; independence of educational institutions relentlessly subverted; corruption ubiquitous in state institutions; free markets victimized by political expediency; foreign NGO’s scapegoated.”⁸⁰ Modern dictatorships do not always exhibit every item on the list, but the list is important in distinguishing modern dictatorships from those of the past, which were often characterized by violence as a means of coercion.

That is not to say that elements of past dictatorships do not remain today, including violence. Putin and his government constantly fall under suspicion of inflicting violence against the Russian people, whether it be in relation to anti-gay movements⁸¹ or assassinations.⁸² Violence in the North Korean government includes “extermination, murder, enslavement, torture, imprisonment, rape, forced abortions, and other sexual violence.”⁸³ Propaganda is still a powerful tool in uniting the masses, just like it was during the rise of Hitler, and it can also be seen in North Korea⁸⁴ and Russia⁸⁵ today.

⁷⁹ Kaylan, Melik, "The New Wave Of Elected Dictatorships Around The World," *Forbes*, July 31, 2014, accessed March 17, 2016.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Human Rights Watch, "Russia: Impunity for Anti-LGBT Violence," December 15, 2014, accessed March 17, 2016.

⁸² Jensen, Donald N., "Putin, Hardliners, and Political Violence," Institute of Modern Russia, March 19, 2015, accessed March 17, 2016.

⁸³ Human Rights Watch, "North Korea," Human Rights Watch, accessed March 17, 2016.

⁸⁴ Corrado, Jonathan, "North Korea's Propaganda Problem," *Foreign Affairs*, March 13, 2016, accessed March 17, 2016.

⁸⁵ Taylor, Guy, "Russia Propaganda Machine Gains on U.S.," *Washington Times*, December 27, 2015, accessed March 17, 2016.

The Emerging Dictatorship in Turkey

In the interest of exploring the possibility that political Islam alone will not account for the decline in women's rights, it is important for the research to use this foundation of theories revolving around dictators, particularly modern dictators, to examine Turkey. Kaylan puts Erdoğan on the list of modern dictators, given that modern-day Turkey fits into Kaylan's list of criteria for such a government:

The media is almost wholly owned by businesses run by Prime Minister Erdoğan's cronies and the prosecutor's office has indicted a host of top police officials for conspiring against the government by revealing its corrupt activities...The state is mandating several hours a week of religious indoctrination in schools while sponsoring widespread housing with no units for single living as high-ranking politicians polemically bully women into staying at home and having families.⁸⁶

Erdoğan has been compared to Putin in his approach to gaining power, as Robert Ellis, writer for the *Independent* says, "The collapse of the Soviet Union and in Turkey of secular rule provided both with the political lift-off they needed to take their countries in a new direction."⁸⁷ Erdoğan capitalized on the sizable conservative portion of the population that had long been sidelined by the secularists, and their support propelled his Islam-based agenda into absolute power. This research will keep these explanations in mind. Given that the explanation for Erdoğan's classification as dictator includes the rise of political Islam, were Erdoğan determined to be the source of the decline in women's rights, the hypothesis outlined above would function as part of the explanation.

Methodology

⁸⁶ Powell, Jim, "How Dictators Come To Power In A Democracy," *Forbes*, February 5, 2013, accessed March 17, 2016.

⁸⁷ Ellis, Robert, "It's Not Their Differences That Have Put Russia and Turkey at Loggerheads – It's the Similarities between Putin and Erdogan," *The Independent*, December 2, 2015, accessed March 17, 2016.

Independent Variable

In approaching the independent variable, which is the rise of Islam in Turkish politics, I first will explore laws that Erdoğan has passed relative to the increased presence of Islam in politics, including the alcohol ban, the increase of *Imam Hatip* school enrollment and the lifting of the headscarf ban in state buildings and universities. This will be presented in contrast to laws and policies that kept political Islam out of politics before Erdoğan's rise to power. Public opinion will provide more insight into the increase of political Islam, particularly relative to the perception of the increase, as well as to changing ideas about identification as a Muslim or Turk first, and to opinions about *shari'a* law in Turkey. Voting data will depict the shift toward overwhelming AKP support and provide indications for the reasons behind this shift. The voting data will examine patterns before the rise of the AKP and throughout the party's hold on power. Additionally, voting data from the most recent elections in November 2015 will show further party shifts. All statements made by Erdoğan and his representatives regarding the direction of the country, along with his beliefs about the role of Islam in the political spectrum – particularly in comparison with political agendas presented by secular parties in the past – can likewise serve as an indicator of a greater incorporation of Islam into the political spectrum. In addressing the issue of Erdoğan's seeming dictatorship, I will look at the last remaining check on the power of the AKP: the courts. They serve as a check that is necessary since Erdoğan sidelined the military, which previously had been seen as the protector of the secular republic. The research will look at how the military previously functioned, along with the patterns of court functions since the rise of Erdoğan. The research also will look at the results of a survey

sent to Turkish undergraduates, which will provide an overview of the opinions of Turkey's youth on the government.

Dependent Variable

As for the dependent variable, which is the decline of women's rights in Turkey, I will look at laws that have affected the rights and treatment of women in Turkey, including the headscarf ban and attempts to ban abortion. I will also look at laws that were passed revolving around women's rights before the rise of Erdoğan and the AKP, in order to establish a base of comparison. Then, I will focus on the increase of domestic violence, including statistics, anecdotes, the lack of shelters for those abused and the Justice Ministry's current plans to classify violence against women as a petty crime. Continuing to focus on violence, I will examine statistics regarding the murder of women and anecdotes revolving around that issue as well. All of the statistics regarding violence will be compared with statistics before the rise of the AKP, and at the very beginning of the party's ascent to power before there were drastic statistical changes. Further evidence will be found in public opinion, in particular about equal rights in Turkey and the perception of the state of women in Turkey. Next, I will look at comparative economic opportunities, beginning with women's employment and ending with education patterns related to women, both before Erdoğan and the AKP came to power and during the course of the administration.

Evidence

Rise of Islam

Amid the speculation concerning the nature of the laws Erdoğan has implemented since his rise as the frontman of the AKP, Erdoğan himself has confirmed his intentions. His work,

particularly with bureaucracies and schools, is geared toward the development of what he calls a “new religious generation.”⁸⁸ The rise of Islam began slowly with the rise of the *Refah* party, but has been largely concentrated in the years during which Erdoğan was prime minister and as president of Turkey. AKP’s success was historic in that all previous religious political parties had either been removed by the military, which had been viewed as the protector of the secular republic, or were ruled out by the constitutional court. Despite the precedent, the AKP was elected four consecutive times with increasing voter support at each election, including recent elections in June 2015.⁸⁹ To begin the assessment of the rise of political Islam in Turkey, this research will look at public opinion. The public opinion is not a factor contributing to the rise of political Islam, but it provides a general overview of where the public stands in relation to the tactics of the government.

The Turkish People on the Rise of Political Islam

The opinions of the public indicate that a change is indeed occurring. A poll taken repeatedly since Erdoğan’s rise to power in 2002 by the Pew Research Center indicates a slowly increasing perception of a greater incorporation of Islam into politics. In 2002, 45 percent of those surveyed believed Islam played a large role in political life at the time. This percentage increased to 62 in 2005, and in 2014, 69 percent of those surveyed believed Islam played a large role in political life.⁹⁰ A similar poll was taken by Polling the Nations in May 2014. The organization posed the question, “How much of a role do you think Islam plays in the political

⁸⁸ Fradkin, Hillel, and Lewis Libby, “Erdoğan's Grand Vision: Rise and Decline,” *World Affairs*, March 1, 2013.

⁸⁹ Rethink Institute, Washington, D.C., “Turkish Elections,” January 1, 2014, accessed April 16, 2015.

⁹⁰ Pew Research Center RSS, “Most See Islam Playing Larger Political Role in Turkey,” July 29, 2014, accessed March 3, 2015.

life of [Turkey]?” and collected answers based on a scale. Sixty-nine percent of those who participated in the poll believed Islam was playing somewhere between a fairly large and an extremely large role in Turkish politics.⁹¹

Public opinion data collected by the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) points to an increase in the number of those who claim to have a Muslim identity, but a desire to keep Islam out of politics. The poll found that of the 1,500 people surveyed, 19.4 percent identified themselves as a Turk, while 44.6 percent identified as a Muslim first and a Turk second. Despite the large percentage of Muslim identifiers, many still favored secularism. In 1995, 27 percent of respondents favored the implementation of *shari'a* law. In 2007, only 9 percent supported the implementation of *shari'a* law, with 76 percent opposing it. Even within the group of AKP voters, 70 percent opposed *shari'a* law incorporation.⁹² So, while the opinion data available points to the belief that Islam in politics is increasing along with Muslim identification, the changes are not coinciding with an increasing desire for the politicization of Islam in Turkey.

The important takeaway points from what this data indicates are as follows:

- The belief that Islam is playing a large role in political life in Turkey has increased in support between 2002 and 2014.
- A large portion of Turks identify as Muslim, but many prefer secularism when it comes to politics.

⁹¹ Polling the Nations, "Polling the Nations," May 1, 2014, accessed April 7, 2015.

⁹² Rabasa, Angel, and F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*, (RAND Corporation, 2008), 24.

- Both AKP supporters and AKP opposition oppose the incorporation of *shari'a* law into Turkish politics.

Stepping away from anecdotal data, the research will now focus on the factors contributing to the increase in Islam, beginning with laws.

Laws

Looking beyond perceptions of the general public, the most obvious source of the increasing presence of political Islam is laws. In 2013, the AKP passed a law banning alcohol advertising as well as liquor licenses for businesses within 100 meters of mosques and schools. Though the government claims the alcohol ban is rooted in health concerns, Erdoğan said that the law had been “ordered by faith.”⁹³

Also in 2013, Erdoğan lifted the decades-long headscarf ban in Turkey, allowing the headscarf to be worn in universities and state buildings, the most significant of which is parliament, bringing the issue more prominently into the public eye.⁹⁴ While some see this change as simply an expansion of rights independent of religion, the available public opinion suggests that the headscarf is not independent of religion. In a May 2007 Gallup poll, 66 percent of the Turks surveyed associate wearing a headscarf with being religious. In the same poll, 49 percent of women who said they wear the headscarf in public see the act as a religious obligation.⁹⁵ In terms of more recent data, I sent a survey to Turkey in February 2016 to undergraduate students in Turkey. The results indicate that of the 22 people surveyed, 12 of

⁹³ Dombey, Daniel, "Alcohol Laws Spark Renewed Religious Debate in Turkey — FT.com," *Financial Times*, May 29, 2013, accessed March 3, 2015.

⁹⁴ Peker, Emre, "Turkey Lifts Ban on Scarves in Offices," *Wall Street Journal*, October 8, 2013, accessed March 3, 2015.

⁹⁵ Rheault, Magali, "Headscarves and Secularism: Voices From Turkish Women," *Gallup*, February 8, 2008, accessed March 2, 2015.

them do not believe wearing a headscarf is a religious obligation for women. It is important to note the flaws of this survey, including the small sample size, the homogenous age group and the concentration of respondents in secondary education. However, information about the younger generations, who have spent the majority of their lives under the rule of the AKP, is an important area of data to focus on.

The incorporation into policy of attire that many see as affiliated predominantly with religion by an Islamic political party points to an increasing incorporation of political Islam, despite the claims of expanding freedoms. The issue is not one of religious freedom, but rather one of the religious implementations Erdoğan has enacted since his rise. While the proponents of the headscarf ban's lifting claim they are simply being allowed the religious freedom due to them, opponents see this implementation as more of a forced, creeping Islam rather than a liberty.

Erdoğan has expanded his reach to facilitate what he has deemed a "new religious generation."⁹⁶ This effort has reached Turkish schools, as there has been an increased presence of *Imam Hatip* schools, pointing to further incorporation of Islam into the political spectrum. These religious schools, called *Imam Hatip*, meaning the one who delivers the Friday sermon, were established in the 1920s and were geared toward training imams. Since Erdoğan came to power in 2002, enrollment in these schools has increased from 63,000 to nearly a million, which has not necessarily reflected a voluntary transition on behalf of the people.⁹⁷ To determine where they will enroll, the students take an admissions test. If the test indicates that they shall

⁹⁶ Fradkin, Hillel, and Lewis Libby, "Erdoğan's Grand Vision: Rise and Decline," *World Affairs*. March 1, 2013.

⁹⁷ Yeginsu, Ceylan, "Turkey Promotes Religious Schools, Often Defying Parents," *New York Times*, December 16, 2014, accessed March 2, 2015.

be admitted to an *Imam Hatip* school, public school is no longer an option. If parents wish to keep their students out of religious schools, their only choice is to pay for private school, something that the more secular-minded parents take issue with for religious as well as economic reasons.⁹⁸

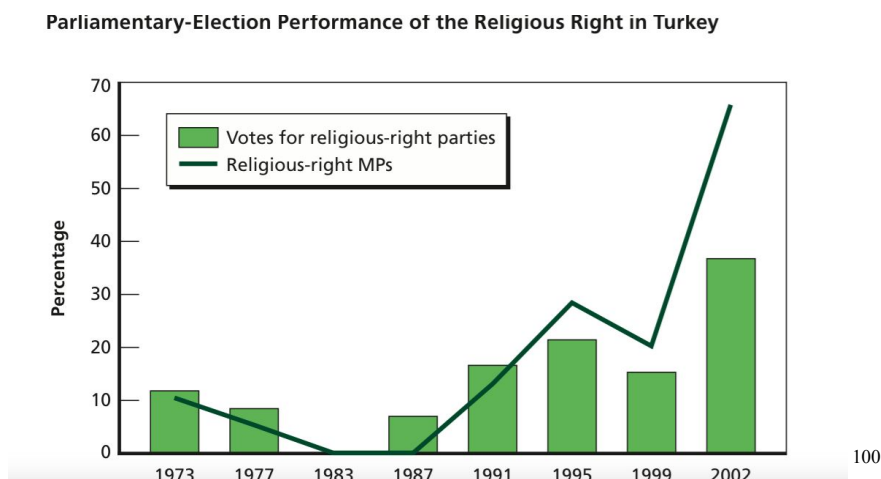
The rhetoric Erdoğan has employed in relation to the passage of these laws, including the remarks about creating a new religious generation with the growth of *Imam Hatip* schools, the provision of religious freedom with the headscarf ban and his assertion that the alcohol ban was driven by faith can all be interpreted as propaganda, or at the very least, geared toward a particular audience. Given the continued support for the AKP, Erdoğan appears to have appealed to the conservative base in Turkey, which has been present all along and was peripheral because of the societal domination of the secularists. The laws presented above, though based largely in Islamic beliefs, are not cut-and-dried in terms of their ultimate goal, which could also be for Erdoğan to gain an authoritarian hold on Turkey by exploiting one element of cultural identity.

Voting Data

Given that Atatürk's institutions were established nearly a century ago and secularism was not optional within these institutions, the case could be made that the general public has wanted to break away from secularism for a while and is just now getting the chance to express this desire. However, Islamic parties have been around since the early 1970s, with the inception of *Milli Nizam Partisi*, or the National Salvation Party, in 1972, followed by *Refah* in 1983. Both parties revolved around Islamic ideology, with the *Refah* party "[relying] on ideological

⁹⁸ Yeginsu, Ceylan, "Turkey Promotes Religious Schools, Often Defying Parents," *New York Times*, December 16, 2014, accessed March 2, 2015.

political appeal to mobilize support; and its primary objective is to establish an Islamic society and state.”⁹⁹ Only recently has this surge in support for the AKP surfaced, as evidenced by the following figure.



The figure shows that not until 2002 did support for an Islamic party, the AKP, more than double, with unremarkable changes in voting behavior up until that point. This suggests that the AKP in particular, operated largely by Erdoğan, brings something to the table that previous Islamic parties did not. The party has benefitted from a concerted effort to make over their ideology to align itself with more moderate political views, and the party has also seen improvements in support as a result of the decline of the Turkish left parties that occurred in the early 1990s. Additionally, the AKP has garnered a large amount of support from immigrants living in the *varos*, which are lower-class residential areas on the outskirts of urban centers.

⁹⁹ Ayata, Sencer. "Patronage, Party, and State: The Politicization of Islam in Turkey." *Middle East Journal* 50, no. 1 (1996): 40-56.

¹⁰⁰ Rabasa, Angel, and F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*, (RAND Corporation, 2008), 48.

These largely Kurdish¹⁰¹ immigrants make up a plurality in urban areas of Turkey and do not gravitate toward secular policies.¹⁰²

This does not serve to explain thoroughly or adequately the continued support of the AKP given Erdoğan's backtracking on moderate policies and the remaining large groups of secular supporters. Looking again at the survey sent to Turkish undergraduates, of the 22 respondents, only three said they had voted for the AKP in the most recent elections, with 12 who voted for the Republican People's Party (CHP), three for the People's Democratic Party (HDP) and four who either did not vote or chose not to answer. Again, the sample size is limited in number and demographic variety, but the data does indicate that the AKP is not receiving the bulk of its support from the younger generation, which could serve to affect the AKP's hold on power in the future.

Based on the contradictory voting patterns, it seems Erdoğan has secured his prominence and persisted in behaving in any manner he chooses through means similar to the leaders that surround him; Erdoğan's rule has become increasingly authoritarian. Pinar İlkkaracan, the founder of Women for Women's Human Rights, a prominent women's rights group in Turkey, has been at the forefront of demonstrations against this increase of political Islam, explaining, "Erdoğan is becoming more and more dictatorial. As long as he is here, it's very clear: things will get worse for women."¹⁰³ Yet, he has been repeatedly elected. Again, this

¹⁰¹ Cagaptay, Soner, *The Rise of Turkey: The Twenty-first Century's First Muslim Power*, (Potomac Books, 2014), 25-26.

¹⁰² Rabasa, Angel, and F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*, (RAND Corporation, 2008), 48.

¹⁰³ Jones, Sophia, "Turkish Activists Say Their Country Is Sliding Backward On Women's Rights," *Huffington Post*, April 18, 2014, accessed December 7, 2014.

information seems to break down the hypothesis, pointing to Erdoğan's goal of attaining an authoritarian government as the more general determinant of the current state of Turkey.

Courts' Check on AKP

Though it seems that Erdoğan has moved in a dictatorial direction, the AKP does not remain unchecked. The AKP has maintained almost 14 years of a majority in parliament, with less than six months in 2015 during which the party did not have the majority. In the recent elections, the AKP regained the majority and received nearly 50 percent of the vote, despite early indications that the party would be forced to enter into a coalition.¹⁰⁴ Given this overwhelming consolidation of power on behalf of Erdoğan and his government, the last remaining check on the AKP is the function of the constitutional courts. Haşim Kılıç, the current president of the Turkish Constitutional Court and a serving member since 1990, has been largely responsible for the movement to balance out the overbearing power of the AKP. In 2008, the court was one vote away from completely disbanding the AKP, which would have kept the party's leaders out of politics. In October 2014, the court overturned numerous provisions put forth by the AKP that were geared toward limiting freedoms and individual rights. The court also annulled "an amendment that gave the state-controlled Telecommunications Directorate the power to block access to websites within four hours without a court order."¹⁰⁵ Kılıç has been an adamant defender of a more democratic constitution, working to uphold personal freedoms that the AKP continually appears to attack. The Turkish Constitutional Court, standing as the only government body untouched by Erdoğan's influence,

¹⁰⁴ Nissenbaum, Dion and Emre Peker, "Turkey's Ruling AKP Regains Parliamentary Majority in Election," *Wall Street Journal*, November 2, 2015, accessed December 1, 2015.

¹⁰⁵ Bilgin, Fevzi, "The Turkish Constitutional Court's Struggle for Democracy and The Rule of Law," Rethink Institute, Washington, D.C., October 1, 2014, accessed December 1, 2015.

frequently opposes the policies the AKP attempts to pass, which indicates a political division that, without the courts, likely would not be apparent.

Regarding the possibility that Erdoğan is moving in an authoritarian direction, the courts remain the only aspect of Turkish society that Erdoğan has yet to infiltrate

The Status of the Military

The military's sidelining raises further questions, not just of the political Islam Erdoğan has brought into the spectrum, but of how exactly he has been able to get away with it. The military was long seen as the institution best equipped to protect the secular nature of Turkey, and it stepped in to remove governments seen as a threat to secularism in 1961, 1971 and 1980, each time removing the government from power and stepping in as the interim government until someone better-suited to protect secularism came forward.¹⁰⁶ In 1997, the military again removed an Islamic party from power, taking out Necmettin Erbakan's *Refah* party, but this time the military did not seize power.¹⁰⁷ Since the AKP has been in power, however, the military has been largely inactive, particularly in regard to its former role. As mentioned in the theory chapter, Erdoğan required more transparency in the army budget, limited the executive power of the National Security Council and removed national security lessons from schools.¹⁰⁸ Six years after taking power, prosecutors indicted 275 people for allegedly being a part of *Ergenekon*, the secular ultra-nationalist group, and for conspiring against the government.¹⁰⁹

This shift points to an increase in political Islam in Turkey, or at the very least a decrease in secularism. It also points to a change in the power of the government. Other Islamic

¹⁰⁶ "A History of Turkey's Coups," *Telegraph*, April 30, 2007, accessed April 6, 2015.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Pope, Hugh, "Erdoğan's Decade," *Cairo Review*, accessed April 7, 2015.

¹⁰⁹ "Timeline: Turkey's 'Ergenekon' Trial," *Al Jazeera*, August 5, 2013, accessed April 6, 2015.

parties have existed in the past and the military had no problem stepping in to remove them, but in the case of Erdoğan, he made sure that the military would have no such power again. This indicates a difference in the nature of Erdoğan's power and that of leaders in the past.

Women's Rights

The research will now focus on the dependent variable of women's rights. Based on the opinions of the general public, women's rights are not where they should be in Turkey. The Pew Research Center conducted a survey in July 2011 to ascertain sentiments regarding gender equality in various Middle Eastern countries. Of the 84 percent of respondents who believe that women should have equal rights to men, 58 percent believe that changes need to be made to the status quo in order to achieve a status of equality for women in Turkey.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, in the survey I sent to Turkish undergraduates, only two of the respondents said that the AKP was the preferable party in terms of protecting women's rights. The rest of the respondents said that other parties were better at protecting women's rights, with the majority of respondents indicating *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, the Republican People's Party, and *Halkların Demokratik Partisi*, the People's Democratic Party, as the best parties for protecting women's rights.

Looking beyond anecdotal data regarding women's rights, the research will now look at the factors contributing to the state of women's rights, which will serve to at least partially explain the above opinions on women's rights in Turkey.

Laws

Laws are the first factor to consider for finding the sources of the above perceptions. The lifting of the headscarf ban in 2014 brought to the surface fierce opposition to the treatment of

¹¹⁰ "Gender Equality." Pew Research Center RSS. July 10, 2012. Accessed March 4, 2015.

women in Turkey, as women's rights groups adamantly opposed the threatened ban on abortion, criticized the lifting of the headscarf ban and pointed to domestic violence increases as sources of their anger. The following evidence corroborates this sentiment.

Beginning again with laws indicating a decline in women's rights, the lifting of the headscarf ban has sparked debate among women's rights activists. Considering the aforementioned data regarding the popular perception of the headscarf as being associated with religion and the 49 percent of women who see wearing headscarves as holding religious implications, their allowance in state buildings and universities has implications for women. Those who did not wear headscarves in universities and state buildings up until now because of the ban may now feel the obligation to wear them. Additionally, secularists view the headscarf as a visible symbol of a threat to secularism in the state.¹¹¹

There is oppression on the other end of the spectrum as well. Now that the wearing of headscarves has been permitted in state buildings and universities, those who continue to refrain from wearing the headscarf feel persecuted for their choice to abstain from conservative dress. Huri Inegol, a Turkish language teacher living in Istanbul, had expected that the lifting of the ban would expand freedoms, as the government has claimed was the purpose. She has seen the opposite. Social pressure and negativity revolving around less-conservative dress has increased as Inegol wears short skirts and is openly judged for it. "The conservative people feeling more freedom and more comfortable, is in exchange for me feeling less comfortable and less free," she explains.¹¹² Women's rights are affected for both conservatives and secularists.

¹¹¹ Rabasa, Angel, and F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*, (RAND Corporation, 2008), 61.

¹¹² Mortada, Dalia, "Some in Turkey Feel Less Free Now That Women Are Free to Wear Headscarves," *Public Radio International*, February 19, 2014, accessed March 3, 2015.

Though it never came to fruition, Erdoğan developed a plan to ban abortion and limit Caesarean sections in 2012. Having previously stated his belief that abortion equates to murder, he explained, “There is no difference between killing a baby in its mother’s stomach and killing a baby after birth.”¹¹³ Erdoğan’s comments and unsuccessful plan sparked outcries from women’s rights groups, including the Centre for Legal Support for Women and the Istanbul Feminist Collective, as well as the Turkish Medical Association, all of whom claimed abortion prohibition would leave women to pursue illegal and primitive practices in order to seek abortion elsewhere.¹¹⁴ There also exists the possibility that this idea has not been put to rest, and the plan could resurface as policy in the future.

Domestic and Other Violence

Domestic violence and other violence against women in Turkey, including murder, are possibly the biggest issues facing Turkish women at the moment, and present a sizeable thorn in the side of Erdoğan’s regime as the strongest argument that women’s rights are in fact declining. According to a 2009 National Research Project on Domestic Violence Against Women in Turkey conducted over the course of a year and funded by the European Union, 42 percent of the 12,795 women surveyed had experienced physical or sexual violence from a spouse or male family member at least once in their lives.¹¹⁵ The survey also found that half of the women who had experienced domestic violence tolerated it based on the mindset that “woman is under the control of the man.”¹¹⁶ Fourteen percent of the victims of domestic

¹¹³ Ahmadi, Arash, "Turkey Gripped by Abortion Debtet," *BBC News*, June 1, 2012, accessed March 3, 2015.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ "42 Percent of Turk Women Facing Abuse," *Hürriyet Daily News*, 2009, accessed February 17, 2016.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

violence in Turkey believed that it is acceptable for men to beat their wives in some instances.¹¹⁷ Between 2010 and 2015, 802 women were killed in Turkey as a result of domestic violence.¹¹⁸ The parliamentary Human Rights Commission released a report indicating that between 2008 and 2012, the rates of domestic violence doubled.¹¹⁹ In a four-year period during which Erdoğan was in power, a doubling of domestic violence reports is extreme. Coinciding with the release of this report, the General Assembly in Turkey passed a law geared toward preventing violence against women, regardless of their marital status.¹²⁰ Despite the promise the law held, there is criticism that it has not been adequately enforced, as domestic violence has not seen any drastic decreases. ““The government has on paper all the means to tackle [the problem]. But in practice, it has been unable to implement its own laws,’ says Emma Sinclair-Webb, a senior Turkey researcher with Human Rights Watch.”¹²¹

Worsening the problem of domestic violence is the lack of shelters available to women. According to Bill Jones, the chair of the Turkey Country Group for Amnesty International, in 2005, there were only 16 shelters for victims of domestic violence. The Turkish government responded to the dearth by enacting a law that required cities with populations greater than

¹¹⁷ "42 Percent of Turk Women Facing Abuse," *Hürriyet Daily News*, 2009, accessed February 17, 2016.

¹¹⁸ Jackson, Nancy Mann, "How Women in Turkey Are Using an App to Fight Domestic Violence," *How Women in Turkey Are Using an App to Fight Domestic Violence Comments*, *Fortune*, July 14, 2015, February 24, 2016.

¹¹⁹ Jones, Sophia, "Turkish Activists Say Their Country Is Sliding Backward On Women's Rights," *Huffington Post*, April 18, 2014, accessed December 7, 2014.

¹²⁰ "Turkey: Parliament Adopts Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence," Library of Congress, March 15, 2012, accessed April 6, 2015.

¹²¹ Feldman, Emily, "Turkey Steps up Rhetoric on Domestic Violence, but Will Actions Match?" *Al Jazeera*, March 18, 2015, accessed February, 24 2016.

50,000 people to establish at least one shelter.¹²² This would have required the establishment of 3,000 shelters across the country, but according to the United States Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, as of 2013, the Ministry of Family and Social Policies in Turkey was running 90 shelters countrywide, some of which were underfunded.¹²³

The AKP has enacted other laws attempting to lessen discrimination against women. Marital rape was criminalized and life sentences were made possible for those found guilty of honor killings.¹²⁴ However, the statistics fail to indicate any signs of improvement, though, and there is criticism from analysts that women are not faring well despite these legislative changes. It all appears to be a publicity stunt, geared in some cases toward the goal of becoming part of the European Union.¹²⁵ The government seems to be contradicting its alleged attempts to address violence against women as in November 2015, the Justice Ministry began making moves toward classifying violence against women as a petty crime.¹²⁶ Currently, violence against women is typically punishable by up to five years in prison. Were the Justice Ministry to succeed in its efforts, the sentence could be negotiated down to as little as one year, or could be done away with through community service or money.¹²⁷ This law would classify molestation, sexual abuse, threats and sex with minors as violence against women and thus a petty crime.¹²⁸

¹²² Jones, Bill, "Turkish Domestic Violence Victims: No Place To Go," Human Rights in Turkey. March 06, 2014, accessed March 24, 2016.

¹²³ U.S. Department of State, "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013," 2013, accessed March 24, 2016.

¹²⁴ Bilefsky, Dan, and Sebnem Arsu, "Women See Worrisome Shift in Turkey," *New York Times*, April 25, 2012, accessed March 3, 2015.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ National Secular Society, "Fears for Women's Rights in Turkey as Justice Ministry," November 6, 2015, accessed February 17, 2016.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

The Kurdish Women's Rights Organization explains that punishment for violence against women as it stands now is already inadequate based on the "'provocation' rule, which allows perpetrators to argue that they were provoked by their victims. If passed, the latest proposal would put yet more women and girls at risk of harm and would prevent justice."¹²⁹

In response to the rising domestic violence in Turkey, Vodafone Turkey, a mobile communication company, developed a mobile phone app called "Easy Rescue." The app is "designed to connect victims of domestic violence to emergency services, including police, ambulance and government hotlines without alerting their assailant to fact that the user has called for help."¹³⁰ As of July 2015, 100,000 women had used the app, and 250,000 had downloaded it on their phones. Vodafone Turkey used secretive marketing techniques to advertise the app to women while keeping its existence secret from men as best they could.¹³¹ The app's existence and secretive tactics speak to the dire nature of the situation of women in Turkey.

Violence against women in Turkey extends beyond domestic violence. Murders of women and the brutality of the act have increased in recent years.

The stories humanizing the violence statistics are vast. In 2011, a woman named Arzu Yildirim was shot eight times by her partner in the middle of a busy street in Istanbul after filing for legal protection more than ten times.¹³² Another incident of violence against women

¹²⁹ National Secular Society, "Fears for Women's Rights in Turkey as Justice Ministry," November 6, 2015, accessed February 17, 2016.

¹³⁰ Jackson, Nancy Mann, "How Women in Turkey Are Using an App to Fight Domestic Violence," *Fortune*, July 14, 2015, accessed February 24, 2016.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Bilefsky, Dan, and Sebnem Arsu, "Women See Worrisome Shift in Turkey," *New York Times*, April 25, 2012, accessed March 3, 2015.

occurred in 2015 with the murder of 20-year-old Özgecan Aslan, who was beaten with an iron bar and then stabbed by a bus driver after she allegedly resisted his attempts to rape her. Her hands were cut off in an attempt to hide DNA under her fingernails, and then her body was burned.¹³³ 20-year-old Cansu Kaya was found murdered in a ditch in June 2015, and the autopsy reports found that she had been sexually assaulted before being strangled to death. The list goes on.

Women's rights activists have risen up to protest violence against women, pointing to the high numbers of rapes and murders of women in the past year as an indication of the issue. In 2014, nearly 300 women were killed by men in Turkey, and more than 100 rape cases were reported.¹³⁴ Between 2010 and 2011, the reported cases of deliberate injuries inflicted upon women increased from 189,377 to 207,253, according to data collected by the National Police Headquarters in Ankara.¹³⁵ In January 2015, 27 women were killed, which was a 20 percent increase over the same period of time in 2014.¹³⁶ When it comes to punishing these offenses, the results are less than optimum. Christina Asquith, a freelance reporter for the *New York Times* and author of *Sisters in War: A Story of Love, Family, and Survival in the New Iraq*, worked with Turkish women's rights activists for five months doing research on domestic violence, specifically working on cases that saw minor forms of punishment for the guilty men. "In 2014, a man in eastern Turkey who stabbed his wife multiple times was given a reduced sentence after

¹³³ Asquith, Christina, "Turkish Men Get Away With Murder," *New York Times*, February 23, 2015, accessed February 24, 2016.

¹³⁴ Girit, Selin, "Turkey Rallies over Murder of Woman Who Resisted Rape," *BBC News*, February 15, 2015, accessed March 3, 2015.

¹³⁵ Bilefsky, Dan, and Sebnem Arsu, "Women See Worrisome Shift in Turkey," *New York Times*, April 25, 2012, accessed March 3, 2015.

¹³⁶ Asquith, Christina, "Turkish Men Get Away With Murder," *New York Times*, February 23, 2015, accessed February 24, 2016.

he argued she was wearing ‘provocative’ leggings and speaking with another man. Also last year, a 62-year-old man who appeared on a TV dating show bragged about how he had killed two women, the first his wife, and later a lover. For those murders, he served a total of 14 years in prison.”¹³⁷

Given that Turkey had previously exhibited social dynamics arguably more aligned with the Western world, it is also pertinent to compare these violence problems to the available statistics in the West. In a 2009 study, the Turkish government found that of the 12,785 women interviewed in 12 regions of Turkey, 39 percent of them had been subjected to physical violence at some point in their lives. The United States fell at 22 percent and in European countries, the percentage ranged from 3 to 35.¹³⁸

Given the unheeded report of Yildirim and the still-high rates of violence, the law geared toward protecting women against violence has yet to fulfill its promises. Although it could be argued that an increase in violent attacks may just mean that more are being reported – numbers that existed all along – the fact that more high-profile and public attacks are occurring indicates an issue regarding violence against women that did not exist before.¹³⁹ Essentially, some of the reported cases are likely resulting from the growing encouragement for women to come forward and report, but the number of murders and high domestic violence statistics concentrated in a short period of time suggest problems more deep-seated.

¹³⁷ Asquith, Christina, "Turkish Men Get Away With Murder," *New York Times*, February 23, 2015, accessed February 24, 2016.

¹³⁸ Bilefsky, Dan, and Sebnem Arsu, "Women See Worrisome Shift in Turkey," *New York Times*, April 25, 2012, accessed March 3, 2015.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

The rise of domestic violence can certainly be attributed, at least in part, to the increase of the AKP's implementation of political Islam. The problem with that explanation, however, is that given that the Qur'an does not include anything about allowing rape and murder, there seems to be another source for the emergence of this brutal violence. Erdoğan's rhetoric about men and women not being equal, as well as the seeming inability of the government to crack down on the rise in violence and murder, are the more likely culprits.¹⁴⁰ Erdoğan seems to have appealed to the conservative base, as mentioned before, and potentially justified violence through his ambiguous and demeaning words.

Comparative Economic Opportunities

Employment

The decrease in employment of women in Turkey can serve as another indicator of increasing inequality. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development collected statistics on employment around the world between 2000 and 2013. The unemployment rate of women aged 15 to 64 in Turkey was 6.5 percent in 2000 and had nearly doubled to 12.2 percent by 2013, while the unemployment rate for men rose from only 6.8 to 8.9 for men during this same time frame. This statistic is made more powerful with statements made by Erdoğan. In November 2014, Erdoğan said, "You cannot put women and men on an equal footing. It is against nature."¹⁴¹ Erdoğan went on to say, "In the workplace, you cannot treat a man and a pregnant woman in the same way," including that the "delicate nature" of women prevents them from doing the same work that men are capable of.¹⁴² Nigar Goksel, a senior analyst at the

¹⁴⁰ "Turkey President Erdoğan: Women Are Not Equal to Men," *BBC News*, November 14, 2014, accessed March 3, 2015.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

European Stability Initiative, posits that “rising domestic violence and women’s low participation in the workforce (at 28 percent, less than half the European Union average) reflected that family integrity was valued over a woman’s individual rights.”¹⁴³ She also explains that the Arab Spring served to pull the country in a more conservative direction, which systematically contradicted the pro-feminist policies the AKP had initially enacted.¹⁴⁴ This shift is suspected to have occurred in response to the weakening of surrounding states by the Arab Spring, providing an opportunity for Turkey to step to the forefront of the region, guided by conservative values to appeal to the majority of regional countries.¹⁴⁵

A study done by Ayşe Gündüz-Hoşgör and Jeroen Smits at Radboud University in the Netherlands further explores the patterns of female employment in Turkey, depending on marital status, as well as socio-economic standing. The study corroborated Nigar Goksel’s assertion regarding 28 percent of women participating in the workforce, and digs deeper for categorical reasons that lurk behind these statistics. Marriage plays a role, as in 2006 only 35 percent of married women were gainfully employed.¹⁴⁶ Additionally, those engaged in the formal economy are more educated and have fewer children, and live primarily in urban areas.

¹⁴⁷ The study found that as modernization increases, female employment will first dip before increasing. However, in Turkey this pattern is obstructed by “the strong influence of patriarchal

¹⁴³ Bilefsky, Dan, and Sebnem Arsu, "Women See Worrisome Shift in Turkey," *New York Times*, April 25, 2012, accessed March 3, 2015.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Barry, Doug, "Now That It Doesn't Have to Impress the EU, Turkey Could Curtail Women's Rights," *Jezebel*, April 29, 2012, accessed February 17, 2016.

¹⁴⁶ Gündüz-Hoşgör, Ayşe, and Jeroen Smits, "Variation in Labor Market Participation of Married Women in Turkey," *Women's Studies International Forum* 31, no. 2 (2008): 1.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

ideology that tends to confine Turkish women to the private domain.”¹⁴⁸ The study also shows that some areas of female employment have seen significant participation increases since the 1980s, including the banking sector, which had an increase of female employees going from 24 percent to 42 percent between 1988 and 2001.¹⁴⁹ The important factor to note is that this increase was due to “organizations in this sector [adopting] secular and global policies in their recruitment practices.”¹⁵⁰ Areas that were moving forward and reinforcing secular policies were apparently those thriving the most.

Gündüz-Hoşgör and Smits explain that the numbers that Turkey presents do not make logical sense. The pattern of low female employment can be explained by the intermediate phase of modernization that Turkey is currently in, but “it does not explain why women’s LMP [Labor Market Participation] in Turkey is lower than in other regions at similar levels of development, like South-East Asia or Latin America.”¹⁵¹ Turkey remains an anomaly among developing countries.

A factor that also contributes to low levels of female employment is the lack of childcare subsidies. İpek İlkaracan, a professor of economics at Istanbul Technical University and founder of Women for Women’s Human Rights, points to this dearth as detrimental to women’s participation in the labor force, explaining, “The few [child care centers and preschools] that existed have been closed down under the current administration. Given the low wages for women with high school or primary school education, it is hard for them to afford paid

¹⁴⁸ Gündüz-Hoşgör, Ayşe, and Jeroen Smits, “Variation in Labor Market Participation of Married Women in Turkey,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 31, no. 2 (2008): 1.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid. 10

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Jackson, Nancy Mann, “How Women in Turkey Are Using an App to Fight Domestic Violence,” *Fortune*, July 14, 2015, accessed February 24, 2016.

childcare.”¹⁵² According to the Demographic and Health Survey in Turkey, one third of women are unable to work because of demanding childcare responsibilities. Additionally, pre-primary enrollment in Turkey was reported to be 29 percent, a statistic lower than countries with a similar GDP to that of Turkey’s, including Chile, Mexico, Bulgaria and Romania.¹⁵³ According to the World Bank, the study indicates that “about 2.7 million Turkish children age 3-5 do not benefit from any form of center-based early childhood education and care.”¹⁵⁴ In order to reach the ideal average number of childcare facilities as determined by the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development, Turkey would need to add 42,388 new facilities.¹⁵⁵ The lack of childcare is exacerbating the unemployment problem for women, and reinforcing the AKP’s focus on family-centered policy. Important figures within the government are furthering this family-centered agenda, including the Health Minister Mehmet Muezzinoglu who, according to *BBC News*, “suggested that the best career option for women was motherhood.”¹⁵⁶

Although the employment rate of women is slowly increasing, going from 22.3 percent to 28.7 percent between 2005 and 2012, there are still thousands of women being thrust into the traditional housebound role of the mother.¹⁵⁷ Additionally, these increasing employment rates do not take into account the length of time women actually keep the jobs they find. According

¹⁵² Fowler, Susan, “Women Still an Untapped Labor Force in Turkey,” *New York Times*, May 4, 2011, accessed December 1, 2015.

¹⁵³ Munoz-Boudet, Anna Maria, and Melten Aran. “Investing in Women and the next Generation: The Case for Expanding Childcare in Turkey,” *Let’s Talk Development*, 2015, accessed February 16, 2016.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ Sevinclidir, Pinar, “Beyond the Headscarf: Turkey’s Women Struggle for Equality – BBC News,” *BBC News*, June 3, 2015, accessed February 17, 2016.

¹⁵⁷ OECD (2013), “Employment rate of women,” *Employment and Labour Markets: Key Tables from OECD*, No. 5.

to researchers, almost 50 percent of Turkish women will join the labor force at some point in their lives, but the low employment rates result from high rates of quitting due to family obligations and poor working conditions.¹⁵⁸ Adding to the problem, according to a National Research Project on Domestic Violence Against Women in Turkey conducted over the course of a year and funded by the European Union, 40 percent of the 12,795 women surveyed “are subject to economic abuse that arises from pressure placed on women by men to force them not to work.”¹⁵⁹

Unemployment of women extends into government as well. According to *BBC News*, as of June 2015, only 14 percent of all MPs in Turkish Parliament were women.¹⁶⁰ This statistic was determined before the November 2015 snap elections, in which representation by women in each of the four parties in government decreased. The number of female representatives in the AKP dropped from 40 to 34, while those in the People’s Democratic Party (HDP) dropped from 30 to 23, and from four to three in the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP).¹⁶¹ *BBC News* also reports that nearly half of Turkish cities lack female representation altogether.¹⁶²

Given that the Qur’an does not require women to remain at home, and that many women in Islamic Arabia were involved in politics and labor, the AKP’s insistence on women’s being pushed into “traditional” homemaker roles may be basing its agenda on something more

¹⁵⁸ Fowler, Susan, “Women Still an Untapped Labor Force in Turkey,” *New York Times*, May 4, 2011, accessed December 1, 2015.

¹⁵⁹ “42 Percent of Turk Women Facing Abuse,” *Hürriyet Daily News*, 2009, accessed February 17, 2016.

¹⁶⁰ Sevinclidir, Pinar, “Beyond the Headscarf: Turkey’s Women Struggle for Equality – BBC News,” *BBC News*, June 3, 2015, Accessed February 17, 2016.

¹⁶¹ “Number of Women MPs in Turkish Parliament Drops after Nov 1 Vote,” *Hürriyet Daily News*, November 2, 2015, accessed February 17, 2016.

¹⁶² Sevinclidir, Pinar, “Beyond the Headscarf: Turkey’s Women Struggle for Equality – BBC News,” *BBC News*, June 3, 2015, Accessed February 17, 2016.

complex than the political Islam incorporated into Turkish politics. March 8, 2016, was International Women's Day, and Erdoğan gave a speech during which he espoused "that the liberal notion of "economic freedom" is not actually as liberating as motherhood for women."¹⁶³ This information complicates drawing the line between political Islam and Erdoğan's use of political Islam within a more complex agenda to perpetuate authoritarianism.

Education

The poor working conditions for women often result from low levels of education, as women moving from rural areas to urban areas such as Istanbul lack sufficient education for high-paying jobs. The patterns of female employment seem to coincide with marriage. Before marriage, regardless of education level, women will enter the labor force in large numbers. After marriage and having children, however, the employment numbers drop drastically. Ilkkaracan says, "Among never-married women age 25 to 45, the rate of participation in the labor force for university graduates is about 90 percent, the same as their male counterparts." She continues, "For never-married women who graduated from high school, the figures are about 55 percent and for primary school graduates, 40 percent."¹⁶⁴ This all begins to change after marriage and children. The employment rates are "seventy percent for university graduates, about 25 percent for high school graduates and only 15 percent for married women of prime working age with primary school education."¹⁶⁵ In addition to the lack of adequate child care provided to women, this trend coincides with the AKP's "family and tradition" platform,

¹⁶³ "Erdoğan praises family, traditional values on International Women's Day," *Hürriyet Daily News*, March 8, 2016, accessed March 19, 2016.

¹⁶⁴ Sevinclidir, Pinar, "Beyond the Headscarf: Turkey's Women Struggle for Equality – BBC News," *BBC News*, June 3, 2015, Accessed February 17, 2016.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

meaning the social and political views of what a woman's role should be once she is a part of a family may be dictating the employment and education opportunities.

Alternative Explanations

Simply Erdoğan's affiliation with a religious political party lends credibility to causality in that women's rights have seen a decrease largely concentrated in the period of time since Erdoğan began exerting influence. However, correlation does not equal causality. It is important to examine other possible explanations.

In seeking an alternate explanation for the decrease in women's rights in Turkey, it is possible that more discontent and more cases of injustice are being publically expressed, discontent and injustices that existed all along and are simply now surfacing. However, the majority of the complaints are specific to legal implementations and societal norms that have occurred recently in Turkey and are largely specific to choices made on behalf of the Islam-based political party running the country.

The more important alternative explanation, however, is the idea threaded throughout the above research implying that the variable of political Islam is not the only cause of the decline of women's rights; rather, it is enveloped in Erdoğan's larger purpose of gaining an authoritarian hold on power in Turkey through the exploitation of cultural symbols. This explanation holds great weight, given that there are sizable holes in the explanation of political Islam as the source of the decline in women's rights. This explanation will be expanded upon in the conclusion.

Conclusion

In a region largely characterized by oppressive regimes and a struggle for women's rights, Turkey used to be the exception, with Atatürk's implementation of secular institutions protecting women and democratic institutions keeping Turkey ahead of its time. With the rise of Erdoğan's Turkey in 2002 as the AKP came to power, the tables turned and political Islam crept into society. At the same time, women's rights have decreased, with lower employment rates, higher domestic violence rates, attempts at curbing abortion and the lifting of the headscarf ban. Public opinion data points to an increase in political Islam, an opinion with more supporters between 2002 and 2014. The increased activity of women's rights groups points to growing discontent.

The hypothesis stated at the outset of this research predicted that the increase in political Islam in Turkey was to blame, but the evidence does not present a strong enough case. Correlation does not always equal causation, and in this case, it seems definitive that correlation does not equal causation. The more convincing explanation is that Erdoğan is using culture and symbols of identity to appeal to the previously disenfranchised conservative population of Turkey to gain an authoritarian hold. This tactic includes the increased use of political Islam, and would likely be more detrimental to women's rights than political Islam alone.

The evidence presented in this research supports this counter-argument. The evidence that points to the rise in political Islam, particularly laws, still holds, clearly indicating a rise in political Islam and a correlated decline in women's rights. However, there are areas of the evidence, particularly the increase in violence, the sidelining of the military and the decrease in

female employment, that are better explained by the broader purpose of Erdoğan to achieve a modern dictatorship. Public opinion also supports this alternative explanation.

The increase in violence, though not better explained by an increase in reports, is better explained by Erdoğan's push for dictatorship. In the Qur'an, *Surah An-Nisa*, meaning the chapter on the women, is the verse oft-cited and interpreted as allowing for wife-beating. The chapter reads, "So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in [the husband's] absence what Allah would have them guard. But those [wives] from whom you fear arrogance – [first] advise them; [then if they persist], forsake them in bed; and [finally], strike them."¹⁶⁶ The most fundamental and conservative interpretations of this verse have led to justifications for domestic violence. However, given that this verse is ambiguous at best, most interpretations veer away from the allowance of beating. Given that the Qur'an does not explicitly allow for domestic violence, let alone the murder of women, even the most conservative of Islamic policies would not lead to the alarmingly high numbers of domestic violence and brutal murders of women in Turkey in recent years. A better explanation is that through Erdoğan's move toward dictatorship, he has systematically reduced the social standing of women through his statements about their inequality as compared to men and his belief that women belong solely at home. While there are many causes of domestic violence around the world, gender inequality is a primary driving factor. "The links between gender-based power and domestic violence are widely recognized, with violence being viewed both as a manifestation of deeply entrenched gender power inequities as well as a mechanism by which such inequities are enforced."¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ Qur'an 4:34.

¹⁶⁷ Rocca, C., Rathod, S., Falle, T., and et. al, "Challenging assumptions about women's empowerment: social and economic resources and domestic violence among young married women in urban South India," *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 38 (2009).

While elements of political Islam may be playing a role in this increase, the gender inequality espoused by the government and the lack of assets available to women are the more likely causes.

The sidelining of the military, though not directly related to the decline in women's rights, is an outside factor that contributes to the counter-argument regarding Erdoğan's push for authoritarian power. As the military has had no problem intervening in the past to remove parties appearing to threaten the secular republic, its lack of action in regard to the AKP presents a sort of anomaly. Islamic parties have existed in the past, so this marks the first time that an Islamic party was able to remain in power while keeping the military in a peripheral position. This indicates that Erdoğan has had an effect on the governmental system that rulers of the past were incapable of achieving.

The decrease in female employment in Turkey presents another hole in the original hypothesis, given that the history of Islam does not prevent women from working, and that the push to keep women in a "traditional" homebound role seems to parallel cultural rather than religious customs. Erdoğan has been firm in promoting a political platform revolving around a family-centric focus, and this promotion has been followed by decreases in the numbers of women in the workforce. Political Islam may be playing a role in this decrease in female employment, especially given that Turkey's female unemployment rates are similar to other countries implementing political Islam, including Afghanistan at 14 percent and Pakistan at 9.3 percent, while Turkey sits at 10.7 percent.¹⁶⁸ However, this shift toward fewer females in the

¹⁶⁸ World Bank, "Unemployment, Female (% of Female Labor Force)," accessed March 22, 2016.

labor force was helped along by the stance of the government for a family-oriented country, meaning that political Islam alone cannot account for the decrease in women's rights.

The results of the survey sent to Turkish undergraduates also bolster the argument regarding Erdoğan's emerging dictatorship. Of the 22 respondents to the survey, 15 said that the AKP's policies and views on the role of Islam were strongly incompatible with their own. In terms of women's rights, 14 indicated that the AKP's policies and views on women's rights were strongly incompatible with their own. Twelve found that the government's views and policies regarding foreign policy were strongly incompatible with their own, and 13 said the same of the AKP's views and policies regarding civil rights and liberties. Though the sample size is small, the evidence provides support for the idea that Erdoğan is making many decisions through authoritarian means, given that the younger generations do not show overwhelming support for the policies and views of the AKP.

Beyond the evidence gathered, the nature of Erdoğan's government can be compared to other modern dictators. Looking again at the list of attributes Kaylan compiled to characterize modern dictators, Turkey checks off nearly all of them. First, Kaylan says a modern dictatorship is characterized by a "media owned by the leader's cronies," a criteria Turkey fulfilled in 2007 when it passed a strict Internet censorship law, which targeted not only pornography but also various social media sites and implemented a two-year ban on YouTube.¹⁶⁹ The survey sent to Turkish undergraduates indicated that 17 of the 22 respondents had been more affected by the censorship policy than any other policy enacted by the AKP, and all 17 indicated that the policy

¹⁶⁹ Akgül, Mustafa, and Melih Kırılıdoğ, "Internet Censorship in Turkey," *Journal on Internet Regulation* 4, no. 2 (June 3, 2015).

had affected them negatively. Again, this supports the claim that Erdoğan is acting dictatorially, given that this policy was enacted against the wishes of the younger generations in Turkey.

Kaylan also says that in a dictatorship, the economy will be dominated by the government, which is part of the reason for the AKP's surge in support. The AKP espoused a strong economic plan, which proved successful in the early years of the party's hold on power, propelling Turkey to strong economic success.¹⁷⁰ The fact that the economy is currently taking a bit of a nosedive¹⁷¹ further supports the idea that many of Erdoğan's tactics have been geared toward garnering enough support to further his underlying dictatorial agenda. Kaylan's criterion that state and religion coexist in a modern dictatorship has been fulfilled again and again by Turkey. The other criterion that Turkey fulfills in terms of qualifying as a modern dictatorship is that the "independence of educational institutions [be] relentlessly subverted."¹⁷² Given the government's heavy influence in expanding the role of religion in education and the growth in numbers of *Imam Hatip* schools, the AKP is clearly subverting independent educational practices. The only criterion Kaylan lists that Turkey does not live up to is that the "judiciary [be] pressured to comply with government's diktat."¹⁷³ As previously noted, the constitutional courts remain the last governmental institution in Turkey that functions as a check on the power of the AKP.

In any study involving qualitative data, it is difficult to establish causation. Upon reviewing the evidence, it is clear that the increase in political Islam is not the sole source of the

¹⁷⁰ Sidar, Cenk, and Emre Tuncalp, "Who's Going to Save Turkey's Economy?" *Foreign Policy*, April 3, 2015, accessed March 22, 2016.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Kaylan, Melik, "The New Wave Of Elected Dictatorships Around The World," *Forbes*, July 31, 2014, accessed March 17, 2016.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

decline in women's rights; instead, it is one factor in a bigger source of the decline. Erdoğan and his government have been strategic in situating Turkey as an authoritarian regime through the instrumental use of culture to appeal to the previously disenfranchised conservative population. These changes have led to a decrease in women's rights, partially due to the implementation of political Islam, but also attributable to Erdoğan's rhetoric and the family-oriented platform of the AKP.

This conclusion is even more logical given the surrounding regions allegedly implementing political Islam. Looking at extreme examples, including Saudi Arabia and Egypt, the state of women, and of politics in general, is entirely dependent on those running the country and their beliefs. The forms of Islam being practiced vary greatly from state to state, which indicates that some other factors beyond Islam are determining the political dynamics in the Middle East. Considering all of these actors would likely prefer to stay in power, the instrumental use of culture and symbols of identity may be a concept that carries over to other countries in the Middle East.

Future Research

By rejecting the hypothesis and exploring an alternative conclusion, this research opens the door to the possibility of creating trend data with repeated public opinion data regarding the agenda the government has pursued. The same questions, or questions found in other public opinion surveys, could be asked of different demographics. The survey sent to Turkish undergraduates would benefit from being carried out on a larger scale in more universities to get a better idea of the overall consensus of Turkish youth on Turkish politics. It could also be administered to other demographics in Turkey to provide variety in the survey results.

The rejection of the hypothesis eliminates further investigation of the possibility that political Islam is at the root of the decline in women's rights, and the alternative conclusion demands extensive research. Given that this conclusion was reached toward the end of the research process, there is much more to evaluate regarding the dictatorial practices of Erdoğan and his government. Thorough case-study comparisons of the dictatorship of Erdoğan to other dictators, including those that employ political Islam and those that do not, would provide further insight into how Erdoğan has secured his position and what the possible trajectory of his power may be. Additionally, women's rights under dictators could be studied further, both theoretically and in comparison to other countries with similar dictatorial paths. Other elements of culture beyond political Islam and the conservative tendencies of the population would provide further information about the methods Erdoğan has employed to situate himself in a dictatorial position. Going even further, the psychology behind domestic violence and murder of women could be studied to gain a better understanding of the root causes of such a problem to determine whether the rise in Turkey is indeed connected to the changing nature of power and the cultural ideals espoused by Erdoğan.

Annotated Bibliography:

"42 Percent of Turk Women Facing Abuse." *Hürriyet Daily News*, 2009. Accessed February 17, 2016.

This article from the daily Turkish paper explores the statistics of abuse of women in Turkey. It provides both trend data indicating an increase in domestic violence, and more detailed accounts of the abuse. It adds further evidence to the growing problem of violence against women in Turkey, and the lack of government intervention.

"A History of Turkey's Coups." *Telegraph*, April 30, 2007. Accessed April 6, 2015.

Appearing in the *Telegraph* as a reference, this piece provides background lending credence to the concept of military intervention. The military was seen as the protector of the secular republic, and when it stepped in to take the offending party or leader out, it was quick to step back into the shadows once order had been restored. This provides key understanding into the changes made by Erdoğan and his government, as well as the possible Islamic implications of these policy choices.

Abu-Lughod, Lila. *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?* Harvard University Press, 2013.

Ahmadi, Arash. "Turkey Gripped by Abortion Debate." *BBC News*, June 1, 2012. Accessed March 3, 2015.

Ahmadi reports on Erdoğan's statements revolving around abortion, as well as the potential for a law set to restrict or ban abortions. Erdoğan equated abortion to murder and expressed negative opinions of Cesarean sections as well. Regardless of Erdoğan's justification for his remarks and planned law, it is evidence of a decline in women's rights.

Ahmed, Leila. *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate*. N.p.: Yale UP, 1993.

Leila Ahmed, the first professor of women's studies in religion at the Harvard Divinity School, explores the dynamics of women in Islam. Acknowledging rampant misconceptions regarding women in Islam, Ahmed seeks to set the record straight by examining women in Islam largely during the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Women played an important role in society and Muhammad emulated a positive attitude toward women with the equal and gracious treatment of his wives. This is vital in understanding the treatment of women under Islam in modern times.

Akgül, Mustafa, and Melih Kırıldoğ. "Internet Censorship in Turkey." *Journal on Internet Regulation* 4, no. 2 (June 3, 2015).

Akgül and Kırıldoğ provide a rundown of the internet censorship enacted by the AKP, which included the censorship of pornography as well as social media sites and YouTube. The

information provides evidence to support the idea that Erdoğan has been acting dictatorially, especially given that many modern dictatorships can be characterized by government-owned media.

"Alcohol in Turkey: Not So Good For You." *The Economist*, June 1, 2013. Accessed December 7, 2014.

Erdoğan enacted a law in 2013 that prohibited the sale of alcohol near schools and mosques, as well as restricting sales to between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. Erdoğan has made claims that the law is unrelated to similar restrictions within Islam. Secularists view this change as an attack on the republic. This is further evidence of an increase of political Islam.

"Analyses: Wahhabism." *PBS Frontline*. Accessed April 7, 2015.

Frontline examines *Wahhabism*, a fundamentalist sect of Islam practiced in Saudi Arabia. It revolves around a literal interpretation of the Qur'an, and is often seen as encompassing an unfavorable treatment of women. This provides an example of the variety of interpretations of the Qur'an and how these interpretations affect women.

Arat, Yesim. "From Emancipation to Liberation: The Changing Role of Women in Turkey's Public Realm." *Journal of International Affairs* 54.1 (2000): 107-123. Print.

Arat, a professor of political science and international affairs at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul, explores the idea that the rights allotted to women by Atatürk's republic in the 1920s left a lot to be desired in terms of domestic freedoms. While women were equal to men in public life, women's movements were forbidden, and patriarchal norms were still in place in the home. The 1980s brought a wave of feminism focused on domestic violence and free expression of sexuality. This article is important in delineating between the rights that were already in jeopardy under Atatürk and the rights that have been taken away with the rise of Islamic political parties.

Arat, Yesim. "Obstacles to Political Careers: Perceptions of Turkish Women." *International Political Science Review* 6.3 (1985): 355-366. Print.

Arat interviewed 16 of the 40 women elected to parliament between 1950 and 1980. The interviews ascertained what it was like to run for parliament and then be in politics, all from the perspective of a woman. This article speaks to the conditions of women in Turkish society and provides context for the decrease in the number of women in politics recently.

Arat, Yesim. "Women's Rights and Islam in Turkish Politics: The Civil Code Amendment." *The Middle East Journal* 64, no. 2 (2010): 235-51. Print.

Arat examines the amendment made to the civil code that had been established in Turkey in 1926. The amendment served to address gender equality, and was met with a great deal of opposition. The opposition was rooted in conservatism and an attachment to tradition, but ultimately the opposition stepped back. The amendment has been criticized for not being upheld. What is on paper and what is actually being enforced is an important distinction for understanding the state of women's rights in Turkey.

Arat, Yesim. "Women's Rights as Human Rights: The Turkish Case." *Human Rights Review* 3, no. 1 (2001): 27-34. Print.

Arat delves into the global context of women's rights, particularly in the West, and the effect this global movement had on Turkey. As Turkey was vying for European Union membership, the status of human rights in Turkey, and subsequently women's rights, was brought into question, and the state had to get on board with a variety of reforms. On the tails of the 1980s feminist movement, changes were made to Turkish policy and a huge showing of support for reform was made. The civil code from 1926 received special attention, and Turkey signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Types of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This information is valuable in that it shows improvements to women's rights on paper that may not coincide with improvements in real life.

Arin, Canan. "Gender Based Violence: A Present to Women of Turkey." *Reflections Turkey RSS*, April 1, 2012. Accessed December 1, 2015.

Arin explores the various violent offenses against women, including domestic violence and what the government has attempted to do about it. Additionally, the article compares Turkey's statistics to other regional numbers, emphasizing the problem and putting into perspective the changes that women's rights have undergone in Turkey.

Arlandson, James, "Top 10 Rules in the Quran that Oppress Women," *The American Thinker*, November 13, 2005.

Arlandson provides an overview of verses in the Qur'an that are often interpreted as allowing for the oppression of women. This provides insight into the sources for some of the oppression of women in the Middle East.

Arsu, Sebnem, and Dan Bilefsky. "Turkey Lifts Longtime Ban on Head Scarves in State Offices." *New York Times*, October 8, 2013. Accessed February 5, 2016.

Arsu and Bilefsky report on the lifting of the headscarf ban by the AKP, an important policy in that it was the one of the most overtly Islamic policies the government enacted. The public responded with mixed reactions; some saw it as the provision of a religious freedom and others as religious enforcement.

Asquith, Christina. "Turkish Men Get Away With Murder." *New York Times*, February 23, 2015. Accessed February, 24 2016.

Asquith worked with Turkish women's rights activists and gained insight into the plight of women in Turkey. The article explores examples of brutal murders of women and how often the accused men faced little to no punishment. This epitomizes the casual attitude that some in Turkey have toward the treatment of women, and the lack of action being taken against the violence and brutality.

Ayata, Sencer. "Patronage, Party, and State: The Politicization of Islam in Turkey." *Middle East Journal* 50, no. 1 (1996): 40-56.

Ayata, a professor at Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey, follows the increase of political Islam, beginning with the establishment of the secular republic and ending with the influence of *Refah*, the Welfare Party based on an Islamic ideology that held power in 1994. Ayata explores various dynamics that contributed to the incorporation of political Islam. Particularly relevant to the state of Turkey today is what is behind *Refah*'s success, as *Refah* set the foundation for AKP's success. Ayata claims that the party's highly organized and committed member base has worked to individualize the agenda of the party in order to gain the most support, by sympathizing with everyday problems, assisting the poor and providing a black-and-white perspective to simplify problems.

Beyer, Lisa. "The Women of Islam." *Time*, November 25, 2001. Accessed February 24, 2015.

Beyer examines women's rights in pre-Islamic Arabia, during the time of the Prophet Muhammad, and in modern-day Islamic countries, exploring the positive and negative effects Islam has had on women. The introduction of Islam into Arabia brought with it positive changes such as the end of female infanticide, and the Qur'an established improved inheritance and divorce rights for women. On the other hand, the Qur'an is shrouded in ambiguity, as much of it is left for interpretation, and Beyer explores countries from Jordan to Iran to exemplify the variety of ideological interpretations and their effects on women. Beyer's information makes the important distinction between Islam's original intentions and the interpretations that have come from it.

Bil, Thomas. "Dictators and Nationalism: European Dictators in the 20th Century." *Tilburg University*. Accessed March 17, 2016.

Bil examines the usage of nationalism by dictators including Mussolini and Hitler in order to mobilize support and advance their agendas. The article provides a base of comparison regarding the methods by which dictators come to power and hold onto that power.

Bilefsky, Dan, and Sebnem Arsu. "Women See Worrisome Shift in Turkey." *New York Times*, April 25, 2012. Accessed February 25, 2015.

Partially anecdotal and partially quantitatively based, the article examines a high-profile attack against a woman by her husband in Turkey. The high-profile attacks against women have

increased, and Bilefsky and Arsu explore other shifts. Domestic violence and murders of women have increased, changes all surrounded by mixed messages from the government. Regardless of the cause, these statistics point to a decrease in women's rights.

Bilgin, Fevzi. "The Turkish Constitutional Court's Struggle for Democracy and The Rule of Law." Rethink Institute, Washington, D.C. October 1, 2014. Accessed December 1, 2015.

Bilgin discusses the Turkish Constitutional Court's endeavors to block controversial policies proposed by the AKP. With Erdoğan's hand in almost every area of politics, the courts remain the last truly untouched area of the government. Numerous controversial policies have been vetoed by the courts, preventing the AKP from implementing further restrictions of constituent freedom. This shows not only that Erdoğan has become largely dictatorial, but also that there is one area of government that is independent of this Islamic influence.

Black, Ian. "Sunni v. Shia: Why the Conflict Is More Political than Religious." *Guardian*, April 05, 2015. Accessed March 17, 2016.

Black provides an overview of the sources of the divide between the Sunni and Shia sects of Islam. The article serves to provide a complex look at the divide, breaking it down to more political roots rather than religious. This provides insight into the dynamics of the Islamic world today, especially as compared to the dynamics in the early days of Islam.

Brooks, Geraldine. *Nine Parts of Desire: The Hidden World of Islamic Women*. New York: Anchor, 1995.

Brooks was immersed in the Middle East as she reported for the *Wall Street Journal*, and her fascination with the daily life of the Muslim woman compelled her to examine it. She contrasts the lives of early Islamic women and Muhammad's wives with the lives of women in Islam today to paint a portrait of traditional and cultural rather than strictly religious or Qur'anic customs revolving around women. The argument advances the idea of varying interpretations and cultural approaches and the subsequent consequences for women.

Bunch, Charlotte. "Women's Rights as Human Rights: Toward a Re-Vision of Human Rights." *Human Rights Quarterly* 12, no. 4 (1990): 486-98.

Starting with the general concept of the importance of human rights, Bunch, Founding Director and Senior Scholar at the Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University, makes the argument that women's rights need to be considered along with human rights as a whole. In the past, women's rights have been sidelined in favor of what were deemed more pressing human rights. Bunch argues that women's rights are just as important, if not more, to consider, as they have detrimental effects on social structure. Bunch's argument lends importance to the study of women's rights, particularly if they are in jeopardy.

Cagaptay, Soner. *The Rise of Turkey: The Twenty-first Century's First Muslim Power*. Potomac Books, 2014. 25-26.

Coleman, Isobel. "The Payoff from Women's Rights." *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 3 (2004): 90.

Coleman, U.S. Representative to the United Nations for UN Management and Reform, explores the trend of a wider acceptance of the importance of women's rights, a facet of society that was previously seen as peripheral. Coleman argues that, increasingly, developed countries are pushing for the improvement of women's rights domestically as well as internationally. Coleman also sees a great deal of room for improvement as disparities lie within the Middle East, Southern Asia and sub-Saharan Africa. Coleman's argument points to the significance of the puzzle in question.

Corrado, Jonathan. "North Korea's Propaganda Problem." *Foreign Affairs*. March 13, 2016. Accessed March 17, 2016.

Corrado's article examines the plans of the North Korean administration to escalate the propaganda in North Korea. Though the plans are flawed, propaganda has been a part of the North Korean agenda for many years. This tactic is important in assessing the methods of dictators of the past and the present.

Dombey, Daniel. "Alcohol Laws Spark Renewed Religious Debate in Turkey – FT.com." *Financial Times*, May 29, 2013. Accessed March 3, 2015.

Dombey explores the relatively recent alcohol ban implemented by the AKP, restricting alcohol sale locations and times. Partially anecdotal with the inclusion of the opinion of an advertising executive, the article homes in on the backlash from secularists regarding the law. Despite claims of being motivated independently of religion, Erdoğan also explained the law as having been "ordered by faith." The mixed messages and policy choices indicate an increase in political Islam.

"Egypt 'worst for Women' out of 22 Countries in Arab World." *BBC News*, November 12, 2013. Accessed April 6, 2015.

The article provides a ranking of the countries with the worst approach to women's rights, including examples of offenses, with particular focus on the problems in Egypt.

Ellis, Robert. "It's Not Their Differences That Have Put Russia and Turkey at Loggerheads – It's the Similarities between Putin and Erdoğan." *The Independent*, December 2, 2015. Accessed March 17, 2016.

Ellis compares the tactics of Putin and Erdoğan to paint a picture of comparable dictatorships emerging from similar backgrounds and employing similar methods. This article is important in both demonstrating Erdoğan's dictatorial path, as well as the characteristics of modern dictatorships.

“Erdoğan praises family, traditional values on International Women’s Day.” *Hürriyet Daily News*, March 8, 2016. Accessed March 19, 2016.

On International Women’s Day on March 2016, Erdoğan made remarks about the rightful place of women being solely in the household in a traditional homemaker role. This provides evidence of both the decline in the women’s rights and Erdoğan’s rise to an authoritarian role.

Feldman, Emily. "Turkey Steps up Rhetoric on Domestic Violence, but Will Actions Match?" *Al Jazeera*, March 18, 2015. Accessed February 24, 2016.

In response to the brutal murders in Turkey, women’s rights activists began protesting in Turkey. They demanded changes for women in Turkey, and the government responded with statements about making effort for improvement. However, given that nearly a year has passed since then and there is criticism that the government has done nothing for improvement, these appear to have been empty promises.

Fowler, Susan. “Women Still an Untapped Labor Force in Turkey.” *New York Times*, May 4, 2011. Accessed December 1, 2015.

Fowler explores the trends in female employment in Turkey, pointing to a lack of child care subsidies as well as social views on the role of women in society as contributing factors to low levels of employment for women. Education also plays a role, with low education leading to less desirable, lower-paying employment. This article points to the obstacles women face in Turkish society due to low state support.

Fradkin, Hillel, and Lewis Libby. "Erdoğan's Grand Vision: Rise and Decline." *World Affairs*, March 1, 2013.

Fradkin and Lewis explore the trajectory of Erdoğan’s rise to power, focusing particularly on his agenda regarding political Islam. Most importantly, they discuss Erdoğan’s moves toward creating a religious generation, especially related to the expansion of the *Imam Hatip* schools. This is important for both examining the origins of Erdoğan’s agenda as well as the manifestation of political Islam in Turkey.

"Gender Equality." *Pew Research Center RSS*, July 10, 2012. Accessed March 4, 2015.

The Pew Research Center conducted a poll on gender equality in various areas of society among a group of Middle Eastern countries, and the results can provide a gauge of where Turkey sits based on public opinion. The topics range from employment to husband choice.

Girit, Selin. "Turkey Rallies over Murder of Woman Who Resisted Rape" *BBC News*, February 15, 2015. Accessed March 3, 2015.

Girit reports on the murder of Özgecan Aslan, who allegedly resisted a rape attempt by a bus driver who then stabbed her to death. There was a large showing of support for Aslan and outrage against the incident in response. This incident falls within the increase of high-profile attacks against women, indicating some sort of shift with regards to women in Turkey.

Gündüz-Hoşgör, Ayşe, and Jeroen Smits. "Variation in Labor Market Participation of Married Women in Turkey." *Women's Studies International Forum* 31, no. 2 (2008): 1-40.

Gündüz-Hoşgör and Smits studied the patterns of female employment as related to marriage and education. Additionally, they explored the sectors in which women participate and the correlating areas of Turkey in which they live. The article provides insight into what dictates employment for women, and finds that married women participate less in the work force. This reinforces the idea of women being pushed into traditional “homemaker” roles.

Hacaoglu, Selcan. "Turkey Abortion Law: Women Protest Plans To Curb Abortion." *Huffington Post*, June 3, 2012. Accessed February 25, 2015.

Hacaoglu reports on the large-scale protests incited in response to the proposed abortion law set forth by the AKP in 2012. The law would ban abortion four weeks after conception, as Erdoğan has equated abortion to murder. The article cites fears of the oppression of women as well as the potential for shifting birth rates leading to changes in power further down the road. All of these elements indicate a decrease in women’s rights, as well as a potential increase in Islamic politics.

Harding, C. "Islam and the Secular State in Turkey." In *Turkey -- Political, Social, and Economic Challenges in the 1990s*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995.

Harding examines the process of establishing a secular republic by Ataturk in the 1920s. The examination includes an assessment of Ataturk’s motivations for separating church and state, as well as the lasting population still attached to maintaining secularism. This is important in understanding the emergence of secularism and its evolution after Ataturk’s death.

Hegel, G.W.F. *The Philosophy of Right*. Ontario: Batoche Books Limited, 2001.

Hegel wrote about the dynamics of the state, including his thoughts on the role of the people and the government in establishing a functioning state. Hegel believed that a community of people needed to be ethically organized under the supreme authority of the government. This theory provides insight into the origins of dictators and the philosophical roots of the relationship between government and people.

Human Rights Watch. "North Korea." Accessed March 17, 2016.

The Human Rights Watch includes an overview of the human rights’ abuses enacted on the North Korean people by the administration. The report includes information on the violence and

torture inflicted on the people, which provides insight into the human rights' abuses by dictators in the 21st century.

Human Rights Watch. "Russia: Impunity for Anti-LGBT Violence." December 15, 2014. Accessed March 17, 2016.

The Human Rights Watch published an article about the rampant anti-LGBT violence in Russia, emphasizing the administration's inactive approach to stopping the violence. This provides information on the dictatorial practices of the Russian administration and the violence and discrimination inherent in many dictatorships.

Ingersoll, Jeffrey. "Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood Offers 10 Reasons Why Women's Rights Are A Bad Idea." *Business Insider*, March 14, 2013. Accessed December 1, 2015.

Ingersoll describes the Muslim Brotherhood's ideas regarding the treatment of women in Egyptian society. The group's oppressive views contributed to the UN's ranking the state very low in terms of its protection of women's rights. This information provides a base of comparison for the various interpretations and implementations of Islam in the Middle East.

Jackson, Nancy Mann. "How Women in Turkey Are Using an App to Fight Domestic Violence." *Fortune*, July 14, 2015. Accessed February 24, 2016.

Jackson reports on an app developed by Vodafone Turkey, a mobile phone communication organization, that allows women who are being attacked to alert emergency services without letting the perpetrator know. The necessity of this app speaks volumes about the situation for women and the lack of outside help available.

Jensen, Donald N. "Putin, Hardliners, and Political Violence." *Institute of Modern Russia*, March 19, 2015. Accessed March 17, 2016.

Jensen reports on the political violence in Russia and the ambiguity often surrounding it. Many assassinations and other acts of violence have gone unaccounted for and unexplained, adding further potential corruption to the modern dictatorship of Putin. This article provides information about the violence and corruption of modern dictatorships.

Jones, Bill. "Turkish Domestic Violence Victims: No Place To Go." *Human Rights in Turkey*, March 06, 2014. Accessed March 24, 2016.

Jones, writing for Amnesty International, explains that Turkey presents an extreme lack of shelters for victims of domestic violence. The law enacted by the government geared toward expanding the number of shelters went largely unfulfilled. This lack worsens the problem of domestic violence in Turkey.

Jones, Sophia. "Turkish Activists Say Their Country Is Sliding Backward On Women's Rights." *Huffington Post*, April 18, 2014. Accessed February 24, 2015.

Jones provides anecdotal accounts of the perception of women's rights in Turkey primarily from women's rights activists. She also provides examples of the areas in which women's rights have been hurt in Turkey in recent years, including plans to ban abortion and Erdoğan's statement of not believing in gender equality. The article lends qualitative support to the decrease in women's rights.

Kaylan, Melik. "The New Wave Of Elected Dictatorships Around The World." *Forbes*, July 31, 2014. Accessed March 17, 2016.

Writing for *Forbes*, Kaylan provides an overview and analysis of modern dictatorships, which are characterized by elected dictators who are popularly supported while fulfilling their authoritarian agenda. The article provides a thorough list of the characteristics of modern dictators, using examples including Russia, Turkey and North Korea. The information puts Turkey on a global scale of modern dictators and provides context for Erdoğan's agenda.

Kuru, Ahmet. "Assertive and Passive Secularism." *Oxford Scholarship Online*. Accessed October 6, 2015.

Kuru distinguishes between assertive and passive secularism, which provides a better understanding of the assertive secularism present in Turkey.

Leake, Adam. "A Brief History of Feminist Movements in Turkey." *E-International Relations*, December 2011. Accessed February 5, 2016.

Leake provides an overview of the progression of feminist movements in Turkey. Most important to note is that feminist movements were not allowed during the time of Atatürk, which could indicate that the prominence of feminist movements today is due to the oppression of such movements in the past.

Library of Congress. "Turkey: Parliament Adopts Law on Prevention of Domestic Violence." March 15, 2012. Accessed April 6, 2015.

The Turkish Parliament passed a law geared toward preventing violence against women, regardless of marital status. This is particularly significant in conjunction with the fact that domestic violence rates have increased, suggesting the law is not being enforced and women's rights are still in jeopardy.

Mortada, Dalia. "Some in Turkey Feel Less Free Now That Women Are Free to Wear Headscarves." *Public Radio International*, February 19, 2014. Accessed March 3, 2015.

Mortada examines the lifting of the decades-old headscarf ban as being restrictive. While there were those who advocated for the practice as religious freedom, the choice has also backfired as those who continue to wear Western-style clothing are persecuted for not conforming to the religious norms. Mortada speaks with Huri Inegol, a Turkish teacher, who experienced this backlash. While the justification for the lifting of the ban was religious freedom, there remains the possibility that it is manifesting as unwanted religious enforcement.

Munoz-Boudet, Anna Maria, and Melten Aran. "Investing in Women and the next Generation: The Case for Expanding Childcare in Turkey." *Let's Talk Development*, 2015. Accessed February 16, 2016.

Munoz-Boudet and Aran investigate the lack of childcare centers in Turkey, which is a factor that contributes to the lack of female employment. This lack of employment thrusts women into the “traditional” role of women as the homemaker. The state does not invest in women or child care, which creates a cycle of unemployed women.

National Secular Society. "Fears for Women's Rights in Turkey as Justice Ministry “to classify violence against women as a ‘petty crime.’” November 6, 2015. Accessed February 17, 2016.

Women’s rights groups have grown restless as the Justice Ministry in Turkey has made moves toward classifying violence against women as a petty crime, which could result in punishment for the perpetrator being negotiated down to a year or less. This choice by the Justice Ministry counteracts any statements made by the government that it hopes to protect women.

Nissenbaum, Dion and Emre Peker. “Turkey’s Ruling AKP Regains Parliamentary Majority in Election.” *Wall Street Journal*, November 2, 2015. Accessed December 1, 2015.

In the recent elections in Turkey, the AKP received more than 50 percent of the vote and regained its majority in parliament, a vital piece of information for understanding what policies are passing and who is supporting them. The continued support of the AKP is also an indication that the party is catering to public desire.

"Number of Women MPs in Turkish Parliament Drops after Nov 1 Vote." *Hürriyet Daily News*, November 2, 2015. Accessed February 17, 2016.

Though the July elections presented an increase in women in parliament, the most recent elections marked a significant decrease in female parliament members. This parallels an increase in female unemployment across the board at rates that suggest an underlying problem.

OECD. (2013). "Employment rate of women," *Employment and Labour Markets: Key Tables from OECD*, No. 5.

The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development provides thorough data on the employment rates in countries all over the world. Turkey's data provides evidence for the decline in women's rights and the sidelining of women to the traditional family-making role, given that the unemployment rate has increased under the AKP.

Peker, Emre. "Turkey Lifts Ban on Scarves in Offices." *Wall Street Journal*, October 8, 2013. Accessed March 3, 2015.

Peker reports on the lifting of the headscarf ban in universities and state buildings, a ban that was originally enacted by Atatürk in the 1920s. Erdoğan claims the lifting of the ban was to allow for religious freedom, while some believe it is a move toward a more Islamic political spectrum in Turkey.

Pew Research Center RSS. "Most See Islam Playing Larger Political Role in Turkey." July 29, 2014. Accessed March 3, 2015.

This source is a graph depicting the opinions of those surveyed by the Pew Research Center regarding the role Islam plays in politics in Turkey. It shows an increase in the belief that Islam plays a large role between 2002 and 2014, indicating a perceived increase of political Islam concentrated during the period of Erdoğan's rule.

Polling the Nations. "Polling the Nations – Turkey." May 1, 2014. Accessed April 7, 2015.

Polling the Nations conducted a variety of polls revolving around Turkish life and politics. The results have been compiled in a comprehensive list for this thesis.

"POLL: Women's Rights in the Arab World." Accessed February 16, 2016.

The Thomas Reuters Foundation did a study on women's rights in various Middle Eastern countries and created a list ranking the states based on their treatment of women. The rankings provide a base of comparison for where Turkey fits in among regional countries largely characterized by Islamic governments.

Pope, Hugh. "Erdoğan's Decade." *Cairo Review*. Accessed April 7, 2015.

Providing an overview of Erdoğan's rise to power, as well as his time in power, the most relevant concept Pope examines is Erdoğan's approach to the military. After years of protecting the secular republic, the military was largely sidelined by President Erdoğan as he increased their budget transparency requirements and limited the executive power of the NSC. This is important in understanding the shift away from secularism, as well as Erdoğan's approach to power.

Powell, Jim. "How Dictators Come To Power In A Democracy." *Forbes*, February 5, 2013. Accessed March 17, 2016.

Powell explores the methods used by modern dictators to gain and hold power, including infiltration of the entire society. He also provides evidence of the political state of Turkey, focusing on the government-owned media and Erdoğan pushing women to a peripheral role in the household. The article provides evidence for the rising dictatorship of Erdoğan as well as the decline in women's rights.

Power, Carla. "What the Koran Really Says about Women." *Telegraph*, November 6, 2015. Accessed February 24, 2016.

Power spent time studying with Sheikh Mohammad Akram Nadwi in order to gain a better understanding of the Qur'an. Akram found 9,000 examples of women in Islamic Arabia who were politically and socially involved. These examples are a direct contradiction to the idea that Islam requires women to be passive and uninvolved in affairs of the state.

Qur'an

The Qur'an provides information with which to assess the origins of Islam.

Rabasa, Angel, and F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*, (RAND Corporation, 2008), 24.

Rabasa and Larrabee released this report through the RAND Corporation, including within it a variety of public-opinion measurements revolving around the incorporation of political Islam into Turkey. The research found that voting for religious parties has increased since the late 1980s, but this has not corresponded with an increase in support for the implementation of *shari'a* law. Additionally, it noted that secularists view the headscarf as a visual threat to secularism. The study is important for analyzing the public behavior that has caused the shift.

"Resisting the New Conservatism: Women's Campaigns for Rights, Peace and Participation in Turkey." *International Civil Society Action Network* (2014). Print.

The International Civil Society Action Network released this brief in 2014 in order to shed light on the status of women in Turkish society. The brief gives an overview of statistics indicating a decline in women's rights, including domestic violence and abortion rights. It also goes in-depth about the work of women's rights organizations, making it clear that many of the advances made by women recently have not been because of the government. The statistics are helpful for ascertaining a change in women's rights, and the dynamic of the government and the women's rights groups provides insight into the functions of Turkish society.

Rethink Institute, Washington, D.C. "Turkish Elections." January 1, 2014. Accessed April 16, 2015.

The Rethink Institute provides information on Turkish voting patterns. Support for a religious party did not escalate until the AKP entered the picture, which provides insight into the idea that

the AKP offered something to people that other religious parties had not. This information can also be compared with the most recent November 2015 elections.

Rheault, Magali. "Headscarves and Secularism: Voices From Turkish Women." *Gallup*, February 8, 2008. Accessed March 2, 2015.

Rheault's Gallup poll focused on secularism and headscarves in Turkey, with the most important results including the poll that sought to ascertain women's feelings about the headscarf. It found that many of them viewed wearing a headscarf as a religious obligation, contributing to the idea that political Islam is being filtered through Erdoğan's government.

Rocca, C., Rathod, S., Falle, T., and et. al, "Challenging assumptions about women's empowerment: social and economic resources and domestic violence among young married women in urban South India," *International Journal of Epidemiology*, 38 (2009).

Rocca, Rathod, Falle, et. al aim to explore the patterns of domestic violence in South India. The most important element of their discussion is the analysis of the sources of domestic violence, including the fact that gender inequality is a driving factor of domestic violence. This is important in analyzing Turkey given that gender inequality is increasing in Turkey, as is domestic violence.

Rubin, Barry M. *Modern Dictators: Third World Coup Makers, Strongmen, and Populist Tyrants*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1987.

Rubin analyzes the emergence of modern dictators, explaining that the dictators are popularly elected and internationally respected. They exist alongside Western countries and participate in the functions of international organizations, providing them legitimacy despite the authoritarian nature of their governments. This information characterizes Turkey and supports the alternative explanation.

Sevinclidir, Pinar. "Beyond the Headscarf: Turkey's Women Struggle for Equality – BBC News." *BBC News*, June 3, 2015. Accessed February 17, 2016.

Sevinclidir provides an overview of the problems facing women, including statistics on abuse and unemployment, and then delves into the responses of activists and their frustration with the government's lack of action. The information is valuable in that it provides both statistics and social responses to balance quantitative and anecdotal information.

Sidar, Cenk, and Emre Tuncalp. "Who's Going to Save Turkey's Economy?" *Foreign Policy*, April 3, 2015. Accessed March 22, 2016.

Despite the fact that AKP rose to power partially based on its economic policies, which proved to bolster Turkey's economic standing and garner the party support, the economy is currently taking a nosedive. This drastic change, and the administration's apparent disinterest in

addressing the decline in the economy, provides evidence for Erdoğan's rise to authoritarian power.

Sutton, P.W., S. Vertigans. "The Established and Challenging Outsiders: Resurgent Islam in Secular Turkey, Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions." *Totalitarian Movements and Political Regimes* 3, no. 1, (2002): 58-78.

Sutton and Vertigans explore the shift from a secular republic in Turkey to one characterized by political Islam. They make the argument that the power dynamic between conservatives and secularists has shifted in favor of conservatives, with the beginnings of the shift corresponding with the rise of the Welfare Party as well as the increased influence of conservatives. This is important for understanding both the power dynamics and the rise in political Islam prior to Erdoğan's institution.

Taylor, Guy. "Russia Propaganda Machine Gains on U.S." *Washington Times*, December 27, 2015. Accessed March 17, 2016.

Taylor reports on the propaganda rampant in Russia, which serves as a means of propelling Putin's power and modern dictatorship. Putin's use of propaganda provides an example of the tactics of modern dictatorships and how power is gained and maintained.

"Timeline: A History of Turkish Coups." *Al Jazeera*, April 12, 2012. Accessed February 05, 2016.

This article provides a quick overview of the military coups that have happened in Turkey since the 1960s. The military were expected to step in whenever a party appeared to be threatening the sanctity of the secular republic. The AKP has now sidelined the military, which speaks to the dictatorial nature of the AKP and its hold on almost all things governmental.

Turan, Ilter. "Unstable Stability: Turkish Politics at the Crossroads?" *International Affairs* 83.2 (2007): 319-38. Print.

Turan, a professor at Istanbul Bilgi University, examines the shift that Turkish politics have undergone, focusing on the decline of the political elites and the corresponding ascension of the state elites. This shift in power has meant a shift in political content and support, one that has also ushered in political Islam. Turkey vying for membership into the EU guided many of its policies, and shaped the political landscape today. Turan also explores the declining role of the military, an important factor in understanding the rise of political Islam, even before President Erdoğan.

"Turkey Lifts Decades-old Ban on Headscarves." *Al Jazeera*, October 8, 2013. Accessed February 25, 2015.

Al Jazeera reports on the lifting of the ban on headscarves in state buildings and universities. The incident is an example of the shift away from secularism, particularly under Erdoğan's government.

"Turkey President Erdoğan: Women Are Not Equal to Men." *BBC News*, November 14, 2014. Accessed March 3, 2015.

BBC News reports on Erdoğan's remarks regarding gender equality, specifically his belief that men and women cannot be put on an equal footing. Additionally, Erdoğan believes that men and pregnant women cannot be treated in the same way. These public statements add insight to the decrease in women's rights, and the views of the leader making choices that affect women.

U.S. Department of State. "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2013." 2013. Accessed March 24, 2016.

The U.S. Department of State provides an in-depth assessment of the status of human rights in Turkey, the most important piece of which revolves around the provision of shelters for women who have been subjected to domestic violence. Turkey does not provide enough of these shelters, exacerbating the already dire problem of domestic violence.

Women Living Under Muslim Laws. "Turkey: New Civil Code Ensures Equality in the Family." Accessed February 16, 2016.

The Turkish Civil Code was adopted in 1926, and in the 1990s, feminists began demanding amendments. In 2001, these amendments were adopted and included provisions for the protections of women's rights. While this was a positive development on paper, there is criticism that the benefits were few and far between. This adds to the idea that the AKP makes a lot of promises on which it fails to follow through.

World Bank. "Unemployment, Female (% of Female Labor Force)." Accessed March 22, 2016.

The World Bank's data on the rates of employment in countries around the world provide context for where Turkey falls in the global scale of unemployment, including information about other countries practicing political Islam.

World Economic Forum. "The Global Gender Gap Report 2015." 2015. Accessed March 24, 2016.

The 10th annual report presents statistics on the global gender gap rankings around the world, putting Turkey at the 130th position, which is five positions lower than where Turkey was in 2014. This provides evidence for a decline in women's rights and an increase in gender inequality.

Yeginsu, Ceylan. "Turkey Promotes Religious Schools, Often Defying Parents." *New York Times*, December 16, 2014. Accessed March 2, 2015.

Yeginsu examines the new standardized tests used to determine where Turkish students will go to school. If the test determines the student must go to state-run religious schools, they must either attend that school or have their parents pay for private secular school. This means that religious education is more widespread as many parents, even if they believe in secular values, cannot afford the cost of private school. This shows the systematic implementation of Islam in all walks of Turkish life by Erdoğan's government.